

SHELLHARBOUR AREA

8 walks

[regional Satellite map](#)

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Nearest towns: Shellharbour, Kiama, Windang

Shellharbour is a rapidly growing urban centre in the Illawarra. Nevertheless, it has a fine selection of places to go site seeing, bushwalking and birdwatching. The ancient figtrees adjacent to the harbour have been home for a colony of Figbirds since at least 1956, while Little Corellas have recently taken up residence there too. On the rocky foreshore its possible to find Sooty Oystercatcher, Crested Tern, Silver Gull, Kelp Gull and the occasional Pacific Gull in winter. Away from the town there are eight (8) excellent walks within a ten minute drive.

Bass Point

Coast walk, about 4km return, easy grade. A surprising diversity of habitat and birds in this small 70 ha reserve. Access from Shellharbour via [Bollawarroo Parade](#). Park at the entrance car park (locked around sunset each day). A walking track is sign posted, follow this to Boston Point through banksia / teetree woodland, pebbly beaches and rocky shore. New Holland Honeyeater, Little Wattlebird, Silvereye, Red-whiskered Bulbul and Superb Fairy-wren are common. In the picnic area behind Boston Point, Bar-shouldered Doves can be found in the early morning and late afternoon. On the rocky shore, Sooty Oystercatcher and Kelp Gull are regular and Eastern Reef Egret is occasional. On windy days a great variety of seabirds can be observed flying close to shore, especially in winter when Australian Gannet, Black-browed Albatross, Shy Albatross, Fairy Prion, Great-winged Petrel, Fluttering Shearwater and White-fronted Tern are a few that might be observed. In summer months Wedge-tailed and Short-tailed Shearwater, Crested and Common Tern are regular.

Follow the coast around to [Bushrangers Bay](#), a popular diving spot and around the next headland before following a track back to another car park, Grey Butcherbird and Eastern Yellow Robin are regular here. Follow the dirt road north then west back to the entrance, passing some great example of littoral rainforest, especially note the strangling figs. Once you start heading west along the road, keep a watch for a

small parking bay about 300m from the Boston Point picnic area. Opposite, on the south side of the road, is a large fig, with an obscure track under its right hand branches. Walk under here then turn right and walk westward roughly parallel with the road, but note there is no formal track here. You are now in littoral rainforest and the understorey is fairly open. Walk west for a hundred metres or so over two ancient sand dunes before emerging back on the road. This area has produced some amazing birds since the 1980s including Powerful Owl, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Topknot Pigeon, Noisy Pitta, Spectacled Monarch and Emerald Dove. Once back on the road, continue west to the car park. There is another track to the south just before the reserve entrance gate. This leads to a pleasant lookout and a small walking track heading south around [Maloneys Bay](#). It's very easy to spend half a day or more exploring this fascinating reserve. On the way back to Shellharbour, stop and have a look at Shellharbour Swamp on the west of the road past the quarry. It sometimes produces interesting species if the water level is low.

Killalea State Recreation Area This reserve is the finest coastal reserve in the Illawarra and contains a variety of habitats and several walks. A full day can be spent exploring this area. The reserve entrance is off the Jamberoo Rd, half way between Shellharbour and Dunmore railway station. A round-a-bout directs you the reserve proper.

1. Killalea Lagoon, 4km return, [Killalea Lagoon](#) easy grade. Take the quarry road from the round-a-bout and drive for around 2km. There is a parking bay on the south side of the road just before the quarry entrance. Hop over the gate at the parking bay and you will get your first view of the lagoon, a sweeping vista of water, ocean, rugged coast, hills and mountains. Before commencing the walk, check the surrounding grassy area, King Quail, Brown Quail and Chestnut-breasted Mannikin have irregularly been observed here. Walk down the eastern side of the lagoon watching for Black-shouldered Kite which are resident here. The eastern side of the lagoon has an extensive series of reed beds. If the water levels are low and mud flats exposed it's possible to find Spotted, Spotless and Baillon's Crakes, Lewin's and Buff-banded Rails, Black-fronted and Red-kneed Dotterels, sandpipers and Black-winged Stilts. Australasian Bittern is also found in the reed beds occasionally. On the lagoon a plethora of waterbirds, shorebirds and raptors have been recorded including Australasian Shoveler, Chestnut Teal, Pink-eared and Musk Duck, Australian Shelduck, Glossy Ibis, Intermediate Egret, Wood Sandpiper, White-winged Black and Whiskered Tern, Little and Tawny Grassbirds, Clamorous Reed Warbler,

White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Australian Hobby and Swamp Harrier. Continue south onto the beach, walk west for 150m, then back onto the track that follows the western shore of the lagoon back to the car park. As you head towards the northern end of the lagoon, an obvious track goes off to your left into the forest on the hill. This area is worth exploring as it sometime produces Double-barred and Zebra Finch, while regulars include Satin Bowerbird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird and Variegated Fairy-wren.

2. Killalea Lagoon forest – alternate route, 2km return moderate. Take the Killalea road from the round-a-bout described above. On the drive into the reserve watch for Skylark, one of the few places in the region where it occurs. Park at the picnic ground kiosk and take in the impressive coastal view. Walk north past a gazebo towards a stand of forest and find a track that follows a small watercourse down the hill at the southern end of the forested hill. The track has an old stone wall down its length, a legacy of early farming in the region. This descends to join the [lagoon walk](#) (1). Good forest birds can be found during this short descent. Walk along the western side of the lagoon, before veering off to the left as you reach the northern end of the lagoon. Walk up the rise, noting the small break in the shrubs near the top of the walk that leads to an ancient figtree. Walk in under the branches and sit for a while, there are usually many birds in this area. Continue following the track through woodland and back to the car park. The rare and endangered shrub *Zieria granulata* can be found here, as well as some good birds, including Double-barred and Zebra Finch.

3. Minnamurra Spit. 3km return, easy grade. From the kiosk, drive along the dirt road for another 2km till you reach a car park at the end of the road, watch for Nankeen Kestrel and Richard's Pipit along the road. At the car park, hop over the barrier and follow a vague track northwest down the grassy knoll (not toward the beach). Follow this down the knoll where it becomes defined, until you reach a junction and turn left (right turn is described below). Plenty of good birds here, including Scarlet Honeyeater, Yellow Thornbill, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Eastern Whipbird, Yellow Robin and Mistletoe bird (look for the mistletoe at the junction). Follow the track south along a ridge that overlooks [Minnamurra River/ Beach](#), Bar-shoulded Dove and Little Eagle are often observed here. Descend the ridge track and enter some hind-dune forest and littoral rainforest that is rich in birdlife. Highlights may include Large-billed Gerygone, Crested Shrike-tit, Emerald Dove and Rose Robin. The track continues south with a short extension to the mangrove lined river edge. At the river you can walk west for several

hundred metres through the mangrove forest to Rocklow Creek at low tide, searching for Striated Heron. If it is low tide, follow the river bank south to the end of the spit, Stack Island, a basalt plug, is at the entrance to the river. Follow the beach back north to the base of the headland. Ascend some rocky steeps to the car park. If its high tide, a track leads between the river and the beach half way along the spit, or alternatively retrace your steeps up the ridge track.

4. The Fig Trees. 3km return, easy grade. From the car park described for walk 3, follow the track down the grassy knoll to the northwest. At the junction turn right. Follow the old track north toward the large fig trees. A short excursion can be made into the mangrove forest on your left if desired. Vegetation here is mainly regenerating woodland, but some interesting birds can be found including Yellow-rumped Thornbill, New Holland Honeyeater, Silvereye, Dusky Woodswallow, Welcome Swallow. The track continues towards the figtrees or along the fence that bounds the large sand mine. The fence track can be followed around until you come to the golf course and Dunmore Swamp. Some interesting melaleuca / casuarina swamp forest is found here with a great range of birds to be observed. Walk back up the hill towards the field study centre and the fig trees. Watch here for Figbird, Satin Bowerbird and Topknot Pigeon if the figs are in fruit. Tree Martins and Welcome Swallow are often present. This was the site of an old homestead and is now being developed into a camping area. From here head south back to the track you started on and the car park. Birds of prey (raptors) are often observed on this walk including Little Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Whistling Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Swamp Harrier, Spotted Harrier (rare), Nankeen Kestrel, Australian Hobby, Brown Falcon, White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Black-shoulded Kite

Rocklow Creek [Rocklow Creek](#) A short stroll through a fine swamp oak forest to Minnamurra River. 3km return, flat. From the car park at [Dunmore/Shellharbour Railway station](#), cross the road and head south along the sealed walking/bike track. This track follows the highway for a couple of hundred metres before veering off into the forest dominated by swamp oak *Casuarina glauca* and reed swamps of *Phragmites australis*. You also find example of mangrove forest *Avicenia marina* and saltmarsh. Some good birding here at times with Tawny Grassbird, Lewin's Rail, Brown Gerygone, Golden Whistler, Yellow Thornbill, Southern Emu-wren, Nankeen Night Heron all possibilities. After a kilometre you emerge from the forest and a few hundred metres to a picnic ground adjacent to Minnamurra River. On the south side of the

bridge it's possible to explore an area of saltmarsh if desired, while at low tide the mangrove forest north and east of the bridge to Rocklow Creek can be explored. Return the way you came.

Blackbutt Reserve A 250ha [Blackbutt Forest Reserve](#) with a fine stand of mature blackbutt *Eucalyptus pilularis* in the middle of suburbia. Access is off Shellharbour Rd. via Woodlands Drive, next to Blackbutt Motel. Alternatively from the south side off Tongara Rd. From the picnic area there are a number of walks possible through the forest up to 3km return. Great spot for a morning or afternoon stroll with a variety of mostly common species. Interesting species include Dollarbird.

Barrack Point A great coastal walk [Barrack Point](#) 3km return, easy grade. Off Shellharbour Rd., turn into Jason St. and park in the bowling club car park. Opposite is Little Lake. Walk south around the small lake, to the bridge and look especially for Grey-tailed Tattler in summer months – the only place in the Illawarra where this species now occurs (due to habitat destruction). Other species often observed here, especially roosting on the rocks at high tide, include Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Eastern Reef Egret, Common Greenshank and Striated Heron. Walk over the bridge and follow Headlands Ave. for a hundred metres or so before rejoining the lake shore where it enters the ocean. Its possible to walk back along the lake shore if desired and look up the northern arm for shorebirds. Pied Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eastern Curlew and Great Egret are often present, while Figbird and Red Wattlebird might be observed in the adjacent gardens. Continue walking east along the road side slowly ascend a bluff 20m above a wave-cut platform with sweeping coastal views. This is a great place for Kelp Gull and Sooty Oystercatcher, while seabird watching is excellent from here in winter. Little Penguins can often be observed fishing just offshore. Continue around the rocky headland and admire the view to the south. Follow the rockshelf around until you reach the caravan park then walk back to your car via Iluka Rd. and Barrack Ave.