Welcome to Yuraygir

When you take the Yuraygir Coastal Walk and follow the path of the coastal emu, you are within the traditional homelands of the Gumbaynggirr (in the south) and Yaegl Nations (in the north). Caring for these lands shows respect for elders past and present and their strong spiritual and cultural connection to this Country.

This unique four day walk traverses Yuraygir National Park, the longest stretch of protected coastline in NSW, and adjoining Solitary Islands Marine Park. Along your journey you will encounter vast heathland plains, long sandy beaches, crystal clear creeks and lagoons, rocky headlands and abundant wildflowers and birdlife. Taking this walk will enrich you with experiences and memories to value forever.

The signposted 65km walking route extends from the coastal villages of Angourie to Red Rock. The walk is a series of tracks, trails, beaches and rock platforms that are linked by following the “coastal emu footprint” marker (Dromaius novaehollandiae). Some walkers will choose to complete the entire route in a single trip, but options for shorter ‘half’ and ‘single’ day walks are available and may suit your needs better.

The walk passes through the villages of Brooms Head, Minnie Water and Wooli. These tranquil communities allow you to restock on supplies and recuperate. You could even stay in village overnight accommodation if you have decided not to camp in one of the seven national park campgrounds along the route.

Your adventure awaits...

Day 1 (18km, 6.5 hours)
Angourie to Brooms Head

Commencing in the world famous Angourie Surfing Reserve the walk descends into Yuraygir National Park and onto Back Beach. At the end of Back Beach a staircase leads you onto the ‘Angourie Walk’. Please note that if the tide is high you may need to walk along the track which goes off mid way along the beach – look for the tall post. The ‘Angourie Walk’ section follows the coastline and is signposted with lots of interesting information about Yuraygir National Park, including the importance of the spectacular Dirrangan Lookout to the local Yaegl people.

2 km south of Dirrangan Lookout is the Shelley Headland Camping Area. This primitive campground is a fuel stove only area with no fresh water, toilets or vehicular access available. From the campground the walking track leads south to Plumbago Headland, along this section you get magnificent views to the west of the conical shaped Clarence Peak and the beautiful waters of Lake Arragan.

Reaching Lake Arragan you have the option of staying the night in the national park campground. Fresh water is available at the campground vehicle entry station. Gas/timber BBQs and toilets are provided. Make sure you check out the views from the Redcliff Lookout before you go.

Brooms Head Beach is accessed via the Greycliff stairs at the southern end of the campground. The beach passes the village of Brooms Head, which has a general store, bowling club, caravan park and tap water. Check www.clarencecouncil.com for further information on village accommodation and services.

Day 2 (18.0km, 7.5 hours)
Brooms Head to Illaroo

At the very southern end of the Brooms Head Beach follow the stairs up to the Brooms Head Lookout. Again you get great views to the north and south. The walking track leads you onto the north end of Sandon Beach. This long stretch of sand ends at the Sandon River Camping Area. The campground has toilets, BBQs and drinking water available. If you have time, at low tide you can explore Plover Island, which has great cultural importance to the Yaegl People.

At Sandon you experience your first deep river crossing. Prior contact with campground contractors is recommended if you require assistance crossing the river.

The river is the northern most point of the Solitary Islands Marine Park. The Park runs for 75 km south to Muttonbird Island located at Coffs Harbour.

On the southern side of the river you are in the hamlet of Sandon which has only 35 dwellings. Permanent European settlement commenced in 1914 by fisherman and oystergrowers. The dwellings are now largely occupied by families where they spend their summer holidays in this beautiful location.

The track from Sandon splits just out of the village and you have the choice of taking the ‘Sandon Back Track’ or following the beach to the Illaroo Camping Area. The campground has toilets and gas/wood BBQs. Please note the fresh water is found at the intersection of the Minnie Water Road and the campground entrance which is approximately 2km south of the campground.

Day 3 (14km, 5 hours)
Illaroo to Wooli

A short walk along the Rocky Point track south from the campground leads you onto Main Beach. This beach passes the small coastal village of Minnie Water.

Minnie Water has a general store which is just behind the surf club, and a caravan park nearby. Fresh water can be obtained in the town.

At the southern end of Main Beach wind your way up the boat ramp road into Melaleuca Park and onto the walking track. This picturesque walk ends at Back Beach timber steps. At the end Back Beach you round a rocky platform and come onto Diggers Camp. Not much further you will access the steps up to Boorkoom Camping Area. Plan your trip carefully here as some high tides and big swells can make this section between Back Beach and Boorkoom impassable. Boorkoom Camping Area has a gas BBQ and toilet, but no water or wood BBQs.

Adjoining Boorkoom Camping Area is the magnificent Wilsons Headland Walk. Its panoramic ocean views contrast with secluded coves, isolated beaches and banks of wildflowers. The track winds down from Wilsons Headland to Wooli Beach. This long stretch of sand takes you into the township of Wooli. The town has various types of accommodation, general store, restaurants, bowling club, tavern and caravan park.

The Wooli Wooli River can be treacherous for swimmers. Prior contact with a local boat hire company will ensure a safe passage, preferably on an incoming tide.

Wooli Wooli River
Day 4 (14.2km, 5 hours + boat time)

Wooli to Red Rock

Once crossing the Wooli Wooli River you will traverse a 5km stretch of rock platform, which can be quite strenuous. This is the most remote section of the walk. It is vital to check your tide chart as this section of the walk may become impassable in very rough ocean conditions and high tides.

The rocky platform leads you to the spectacular Freshwater Beach. In this section of the coast you come across Yuraygir’s most impressive pandanus palms (Pandanus tectorius). Whilst not a true palm the pandanus has spined leaves in a spiral arrangement. Wildlife take advantage of the spiny leaves by living in the tree for protection and favour its fruit. The Gumbaynggirr people used pandanus leaves to weave neckbands and armbands. The fibre of the leaves can be used as string for dillybags, baskets, mats and shelters.

The pandanus is an important Gumbaynggirr ceremonial plant, however, Elders permission is required to pick its leaves.

The Freshwater Walking Track links the beach with the Pebbley Beach Camping Area. Please note that there is no water in the campground. However, wood BBQs and toilets are provided. From the campground you cross Station Creek and follow the beach to the Corindi River. The northern and southern end of Station Creek Beach is one of the few beaches used for breeding by the endangered little tern. Breeding success for these birds has improved through the cooperation of visitors and management actions such as fencing, fox baiting and vehicle exclusion areas.

The village of Red Rock abuts the Corindi River. Again crossing the river will require watercraft support and this should be arranged prior to crossing.

Always people here

The landscape that is Yuraygir National Park has been, and remains, the Country of Aboriginal groups. Generations of Taeg and Gumbaynggirr people camped, fished and held ceremonies across the whole of the rich environment between the Clarence River and the coast.

From the early nineteenth century, the Clarence coast became a relatively isolated place in an economically marginal region. The soils of its forests, heathlands and swamps were not suitable for intensive agriculture.

While commercial fishing, sandmining and summer holidays brought people to the coast in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its distance from major roads and from large regional centres meant that it was bypassed in the 1960s North Coast development boom.

After the park’s gazettal in 1980 human activity in the coastal areas increased. Park gazettal coincided with a rise in tourism and recreational activity, ‘sea changers’ moving to the north coast to live and the end of pastoral activities, timber getting and mining which made the area more amenable for recreation.

Keeping a look out for coastal emus, if you happen to see any along your walk send the National Parks an email of where, when and how many for our records.

The marker footprint is colour coded to delineate what the walking surface will be.

River crossing – Blue
Beach Walking – Orange
Rock Platforms – Red
Bush Tracks – Green

You will encounter markers at track junctions or where the track surface changes.

A snapshot in time

1828 Captain Rous’s expedition notes the existence of the Sandon River
1840s Decade of Red Rock massacre
1914 First hut built at Sandon (north side)
1940 Bird and animal sanctuary proclaimed between Angourie and Woolgoolga: shooting prohibited.
1940s Logging intensifies
1943 World War II mustard gas trials between Wooli and Minnie Water
1950s Maclean Shire Council establishes camping reserve by the Sandon River
1962 Banana plantation near Station Creek
1969 Sand mining escalates
1975 Red Rock and Angourie national parks gazetted
1977 Sand mining banned
1980 Yuraygir National Park gazetted, amalgamating Red Rock and Angourie national parks

In case of an emergency

• Keep your mobile phone turned off to save battery, except in the case of an emergency.
• Police, ambulance, fire – call 000 or 112 from your mobile phone. Give the name Yuraygir National Park and your current location.
• Mobile phone reception is limited. Pay phones are located in all coastal villages, caravan parks and the Sandon River Camping Area.

Plan ahead...

➤ Water. Water is not available at all campsites. Ensure you carry sufficient between water points.

➤ Food. Carry extra food. Rough seas may mean some sections of beach are unpassable, even at low tide.

➤ Rubbish. Rubbish and recycling stations are available at each national park campground. Cans, plastic bottles and glass can be recycled. Paper is not collected as part of the Yuraygir recycling program.

➤ River crossings. Organise watercraft for safe river crossings at Sandon, Wooli and Red Rock well ahead of your trip. The safest crossing is undertaken on an incoming tide.

➤ Rock platforms. Check your tide chart to ensure rock platforms are traversed at low tide.

➤ Beach walking. Vehicles are permitted on some beaches. Be alert and listen for their approach.

➤ Notification. Advise a responsible person of your departure and expected time of return and check in with this person when you return.

➤ Direction of walk. Best walked north to south with the sun at your back.

➤ Protection. Always where hat, sunscreen and strong sturdy footwear.