

## Bawley Bush Retreat

1. **Bush walks, on site:** You are free to walk anywhere on our 36-acre property and alongside the Lake (a public reserve), all at your own risk. We have almost 2km of walks. Field notes for these are contained in a separate .pdf file on this site. Our walking tracks are limited compared with the many beautiful bush and beach walks in the district.
2. **Bush walks, district:** *Please refer to the rear of the Bawley Coast tear-off Map available in your cottage for comprehensive district activities information.* We have been advised by insurance brokers not to actually recommend any walks at all!! So, here we'll just tell you about walks we enjoy and you can make your own decision. Apart from enjoying the walks on our own property we often enjoy the beautiful 1-2 hour return walk north past Nuggan Head and Meroo from the Willinga car-park and the return walk behind the dune. We love the spectacular 2-8 hour return beach walk from Pretty Beach south to Pebbly Beach and the exhilarating and initially steep 2-hour return climb/walk to the 800m Pigeon House Mountain. Pigeon House car park is 40 minutes drive by gravel road. There is a steep climb from the carpark, a long level section before a stepped track and, finally, steel ladders to the summit. From there, on a clear day, we have enjoyed fantastic views of the Budawangs and the coast. There are many other walks we enjoy

One of the best walks (or mountain cycle ride) in our area is to the top of Mt Durras. At 280m it is the highest closest "mountain" to the coast in NSW. It's easiest access is from the carpark at the top of on Mountain Road. The summit once contained a farm, resumed by National Parks in the 1980s, that took advantage of the soils produced by the perched basaltic outcrop that exists there. To access the overgrown views of the coast look for the sandstone outcrops located about 200m east and west from the old track...the easiest is 200m east of the old water tank. Take binoculars between late May/June and September/November to spot migrating whales travelling north in June and then south later.

There are numerous National Park walks on the coast and serious ones in the hinterland. Detailed maps and details from the Bawley Visitors Centre or National Parks office in Ulladulla. There are two coastal aboriginal cultural walks in Ulladulla (one on Warden Head, the other north of the harbour).

3. **Out-and-about hazards:** The natural hazards that generally exist on the NSW coastal fringes and especially in coastal bushland exist also on our property. These range from trip-and-fall hazards such as uneven and/or slippery ground, holes made by native animals, fallen timber/branches, creepers, exposed roots and rocks to mosquitoes, ticks, leeches, snakes and spiders. It is your responsibility to be aware of these, to look out for them on behalf of yourselves and your children and to avoid them. When walking, wear sturdy walking shoes or boots, long trousers, long sleeved shirts and use insect repellents especially around entry points on ankles, arms and necks. Don't push through undergrowth. Keep to cleared areas. Bites from mosquitos, ticks or leeches (possible after extended wet weather) can be unpleasant and itchy, very occasionally problematical, but remember the bush is their home, not ours. An antihistamine taken after a bite can ameliorate a possible allergic reaction, a serious allergic reaction needs emergency treatment. *If the skin area around a leech bite is red after a couple of days (a rare but possible event) seek prompt medical advice to treat a possible infection.* Balance at all times, you are statistically much more likely to be hurt on the road getting here or going home or have a near death experience in the surf than to have your life threatened by a spider, bug or a snake. You will almost certainly not see one but the most common snakes here are: the Small-eyed, Red-bellied Black, Golden Crown, Mustard Bellied and

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Diamond Python. There are others. Keep a lookout, do not disturb them, let them move away...local snakes are generally not aggressive unless surprised, accidentally trodden on or provoked.

4. **Drives:** The many local beaches accessible from sealed roads are our main local attraction. We don't mind gravel roads and enjoy many interesting hinterland destinations accessed by them in our two-wheel drive car. We have found *Meroo Lake* within the new Meroo National Park to be great for prawning in the months around Christmas. It has 2 access roads and is an excellent kayaking lake. The southern access is adjacent to Termeil Nursery on the highway 1.5km north of Termeil service station and passes through a grand old growth forest. We depth test the big pothole first (we once found it to be *very* deep!!) and now give it a wide berth. The northern access is just south of Termeil Creek on the highway. Though kangaroos are almost always on our property we have taken kids and overseas tourists to see kangaroos in larger numbers at Kioloa oval, *Pretty Beach* and the somewhat over-hyped *Pebbly Beach* (\$7 National Parks car-parking fee, honour system). We have enjoyed walking the *Discovery Trail* (very enjoyable old-growth forest interpretive walk that takes about 40 minutes) near North Durras (follow signs off highway at N Durras turn-off). We have found the drive past Pigeon House and a picnic at Yadboro by the Clyde River and continuing on through the never-ending state forests along the Western Distributor Road to the Kings Highway with its spectacular views to be an always enjoyable experience. We have picnicked too at *Shallow Crossing* (where the Clyde road ford can become temporarily impassable at seasonally high tides) after picking summer berries at the U-pick Clyde River Berry Farm. There on a hot day we have frolicked in the river. We have driven just 10km past Shallow Crossing up to the very top of *Mt Mogood* (the view almost rivals Pigeon House but without the requirement to physically climb there to see it). By making this a round trip we have returned home by looping back on the Kings Highway to Nelligen and Batemans Bay.
5. **Rural attractions:** If travelling Monkey Mountain Road towards Milton or towards Pigeon House Mt (interesting drives) drop into the Pigeon House tea rooms, open every day 9-3 except, great views, meals \$12-\$20, 24 Clyde Ridge Road (just west of Woodburn Road intersection, Ph 4457 3097). While in the Clyde River/Brooman/Shallow Crossing area consider stopping off at Alan Dickson's *Blueberry farm* to pick yummy blueberries (December/January). Phone 4478-1057 for details...refer to The Bawley Coast tear-off map for directions. The south coast has become yet another wine region. Call in and say g'day to our nearly-neighbours Chris and Marg Watt at *Bawley Vale Estate* on Bawley Point Road just up from Willinga Road. BVE picked its first vintage in 2005 and it produces award winning, south coast wines. The business is child-oriented with deer, alpacas and other animals to see. Tasting and cellar door sales available at both wineries. Buy honey from the Lees in Tallawallah Way.
6. **For kids, all ages:** When Willinga Lake is occasionally open to the sea we have found that our young visitors really enjoy swimming or tide-floating at the inlet.... accessible from the Willinga carpark at the north end of Murramarang Road (turn left at the Bawley Point T-intersection). The inlet has a sandy beach and a variable tidal flow ranging from gentle to quite strong. Supervision of children is essential but visibility is good, the water not deep and kids LOVE it. The inlet faces west over water and is a perfect protected place to picnic if there is an easterly or southerly blowing. Headlands and islands also protect most ocean beaches so that there is somewhere protected to go with kids in most

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wind conditions.

When the beach is not an option, the skate park at South Ulladulla or the heated pool at The Leisure Centre off Green Street may be worth a go. We have enjoyed excellent school-holiday horseback riding with grandkids at Timbertops (ph 4457 1008), about 400 metres north of the highway intersection at Termeil. At Batemans Bay, Birdland (native animals, birds and reptiles) is always a great hit with under 10s. Mogo Zoo (a real international zoo with bears, tigers and lions and much more, ph 4474 4930), an absolute must visit, is only 40 minutes away and we have taken grandkids there at their insistence *many* times. We can't recommend it too highly. Great for adults too. We also recommend the extensive and landscaped Eurobodalla (native) Botanical Gardens just 5mins south of Batemans Bay on the Highway, food too. When *really* desperate there are twin cinemas at both Batemans Bay and Ulladulla. They show most recent releases of popular films.

7. **Sports:** There are tennis courts at Kioloa (bookings 4457 1330) and high quality 27-hole golf courses at Mollymook and Batemans Bay.
8. **Water sports:** We are not board surfers but we know that the most popular serious surfing spot is at south-facing Sandmines. Park just south of Brush Island Farm and take walkway about 300m to beach. Body-surfing/boarding for amateurs can be enjoyed almost anywhere but we prefer Bawley (the closest beach to us), Gannet and the Murramarang Beaches. The better body-boarding surfing-emergent teenagers prefer the breaks off Bawley Point, Cormorant (reefs) or Gannet Beach headlands. Many people and some diving clubs come to this area to dive and snorkel. Be aware beaches everywhere have rips that can sometimes be dangerous. If you get taken out of your depth do not panic but enjoy the ride by allowing yourself to be drawn out, swimming parallel to the beach towards white water and then slowly and gently work your way back. Your enemy is getting tired limbs. No beaches around here are patrolled by lifesavers...the nearest is at the south end of Mollymook Beach. If you are not experienced in the surf stay in shallow water or on the sand. In summer north-east breezes can bring bluebottles (stingers) on shore. Some say vinegar helps painful stings but the standard treatment at hospitals now is warm water baths.
9. **Fishing:** You have come to south coast fishing heaven. In 2006 the NSW government gazetted a Marine Park all the way from Bawley Point to Wallaga Lake north of Bermagui and 3 miles to seawards. There are mapped No Take zones in which recreational fishing is forbidden but the good news is that commercial fishing, with a few exceptions, has been terminated in the Marine Park area. Fisherman say that catches have improved. Bill has safely fished off the higher rocks at Nuggan Head and Merry Beach/Snapper Head (but be aware that rock fishing can be dangerous). Bawley Point gantry is a high, fairly safe and sometimes productive ocean spot. The Bawley Headland and others, being low, are only for experienced and careful rock fishermen. Excellent beach fishing spots abound. Try to get live bait but many fish successfully with plastics. There are boat launching ramps at Bawley Point and Kioloa. The closest lake fishing by boat is in Durras and Burrill Lakes. Lake Willinga is too shallow. Meroo is accessible with trouble but kayak fishing there for flathead/bream can be rewarding. Don't forget you must have a fishing licence....available at Bawley Point Bait and Tackle. Prawning gets better and better in the "darks" between November and February. Closest prawning spots are Lakes Willinga (near the inlet) and Meroo. Perhaps you may be interested in snorkelling and/or abalone collecting (but note licensing, the 100mm size limit and catch limits are actively policed).

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10. **Designated driver:** Please designate a person to remain sober enough to drive home, even from Bawley Point. For those not used to country driving at night, please note that alertness and quick reflexes are important. There are many kangaroos and some are very large and you can seriously damage your car if you hit one. Over peak periods, all local roads are heavily policed, and random breath testing is common. The long 50km/h speed limit in Bawley Point irks many and has raised a lot of revenue. Be wary. **Please drive slowly on Willinga Road, to avoid hitting water dragons (by day at the bridge) and the kangaroos and wallabies that can jump suddenly in front of you, especially at night.**

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