

Canoeing

Canoeing is a lot of fun, but if you don't know the dangers, you could get into trouble on the water. There are some important things you should know to keep yourself safe. Here are some tips for keeping dry and steering clear of danger:

- *Have the proper safety equipment:- Sunscreen, hat, enclosed shoes. Always wear shoes when in the water as there are sharp objects submerged.*
- *Lifejackets must be worn by non swimmers and children.*
- *Inspect your canoe for damage and leaks before going into the water.*
- *Do not overload the canoe.*
- *Avoid snakes swimming in the water. Don't hit them with a paddle as this may flick them into the canoe.*
- *Have someone hold the canoe steady - you don't want to tip the canoe before you even get out on the water!*
- *Crouch Low - keep your knees bent and grab the side of the canoe for balance as you walk to your seat.*
- *Always walk along the centreline - keeping your feet on the centreline will help keep the canoe from rocking.*
- *Avoid sudden or jerky movements.*
- *Stay clear of low hanging branches and bridges along the shore line.*
- *Do not canoe in bad weather.*

If your canoe tips over:

- *Do not panic.*
- *Stay with your canoe - Paddle or push your canoe to shore - you can get out in shallow water and flip the canoe to dump out the water and climb in. Your canoe will float even if it's full of water until you can get to shore to empty it.*

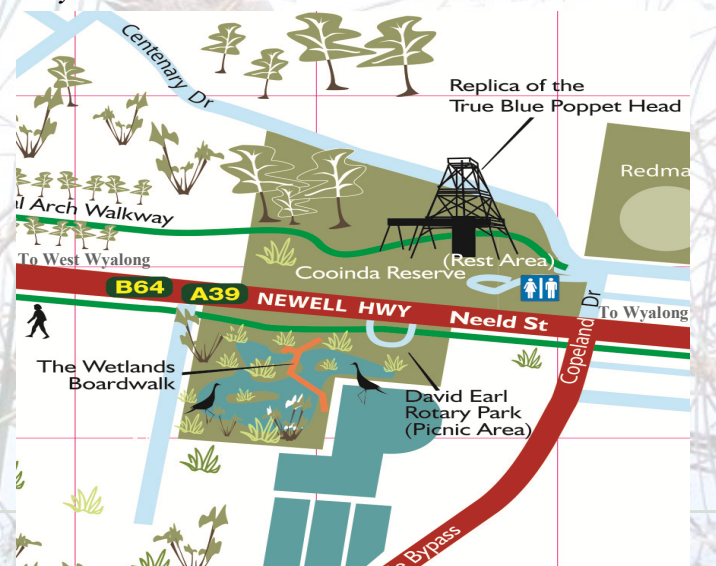


General safety at The Wetlands

- *Stay on the trails and paths where they exist and keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.*
- *Do not litter and contain your rubbish to the bins provided.*
- *Always take adequate precautions against sunburn. Wear a hat and use a sunscreen. Stay hydrated on hot days by drinking enough water.*
- *Do not bring glass near the water where it can break and create a hazard for others.*
- *While canoeing, check for variable water levels, especially during or after a storm. Always check the water depth before you enter the water. Do not enter the water during a storm. Be aware that conditions can change during your time at the water.*
- *Be aware of submerged hazards such as branches and rocks, especially when the water is murky.*
- *Children should be actively supervised at all times when they are around the water.*

Always :

- *Be aware of the activities of others around the water, such as fishing, canoeing and bird watching.*
- *Stay away from wildlife, as their behaviour can be unpredictable and dangerous. Do not try to handle or catch wildlife. Don't disturb bird nests.*
- *Stand still or walk away quietly when you see a snake. Don't try to kill or catch a snake as most bites occur that way.*



Guidelines

for Bird Watching, Canoeing and Recreational Fishing

at

The Wetlands



West Wyalong

This is a project proudly developed by Bland Shire Council as an environmental and passive recreational area for the community and visitors.

The Wetlands was developed on a pre-existing natural waterway and bird and wildlife sanctuary.

Recreational Fishing

Recreational fishing in the dams and streams is allowed on the basis of catch and release. Golden Perch, which was introduced to The Wetlands, responds well to catch and release. The NSW Recreational Fishing Catch and Release Handbook provides the following important guidelines to ensure survival of the fish.

- Reduce wildlife injuries by attending your lines and avoid bird feeding areas. Use environmentally friendly fishing tackle such as lead-alternative sinkers, biodegradable line and non-stainless hooks where possible.
- Golden Perch has been released in The Wetlands for the sole purpose of catch and release. All caught fish must be returned to the water as soon as possible using the best practice catch and release techniques as described below. Fishing with nets is not allowed.
- Golden Perch are carnivores, feeding on smaller fish, crustaceans like yabbies and shrimp, frogs and aquatic invertebrates. Good baits to use for Golden Perch are shrimp, yabbies, worms, spinner baits, minnows or bibless lures. Deep diving plug lures are favoured, though spinner baits and vibration lures are also successful. A strike from a Golden Perch on a lure is often aggressive and they have a powerful fighting style with strong beats of their tail.
- Golden Perch responds well to catch and release. The main factors that reduce survival of released fish are deep hooking and poor handling.



- Use barbless hooks or hooks with reduced barbs to make hook removal easier and minimise hook damage. This can be achieved by squeezing barbs down with pliers, or filing down larger barbs.
- Minimise the length of time the fish is out of the water and swiftly unhook. Try to remove hooks and release fish as quickly as possible. The use of needle-nosed pliers or hook retrieving devices can greatly reduce time spent unhooking.



- Ideally unhook fish while they are still in the water.
- If the fish is hooked deeply, cut the line as close as possible to the fish's mouth rather than removing the hook.
- Handle fish firmly and carefully. Avoid dropping fish on hard and hot surfaces. Use wet hands or wet gloves when handling a fish to minimise damage to its skin.
- A smooth, wet surface such as vinyl covered foam is best to lay fish on if they are removed from the water.



- Carefully return fish to the water. Do not throw them. Take care to revive any fish upon release if they appear exhausted (struggling to hold themselves upright and/or unable to swim away). Gently hold or push the fish through the water so that it obtains a good flow of water over its gills.
- If you are going to take photos of your fish before release, support the fish properly. Do not hold fish by their gills or eyes.

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Please refer to 'The Wetlands' brochure for more information

Bird Watching



Many native birds have settled in The Wetlands.

These include:

- Robins, Thornbills, Doves, Finches, Ducks, Pelicans, Cormorants, a variety of Water Fowl and Kookaburras as well as many other species.

The following are guidelines from BirdLife Australia to promote the welfare of birds and their environment:

- Support the protection of birds and their habitat.
- Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger.
- Avoid using methods such as flushing, spotlighting and call playback, particularly during nesting season when birds may be called off incubation duties, or even abandon the nest altogether.
- Be aware of the impact photography can have on birds- avoid lingering around nests or core territories for long periods and limit the use of artificial light.
- Avoid handling birds.
- Report rare bird sightings to conservation authorities and consider the wellbeing of the bird before making this knowledge more publically available.



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For more information please see 'The Wetlands' brochure or visit the Bland Shire Council at

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