

Hallidays Point Rainforest Walks



Diamond Beach

Shelly Beach

Red Head

*Black Head
Beach*

Black Head

Pebbly Beach

Back Beach

Hallidays Point
Landcare Group

Hallidays Point Walks

The NSW Lands Department established these scenic walking tracks in 1992. Black Head Rainforest Reserve, Red Head Rainforest Reserve and Black Head Flora Reserve remain Crown Land and are now managed by Greater Taree City Council. The Hallidays Point Landcare Group was established in 1991 to regenerate littoral rainforest; they have removed large infestations of environmental weeds and planted thousands of trees. In 2002, a Manning Coastcare team began regeneration work in the reserves. Whilst there has been a remarkable improvement in the condition of the reserves, there are still some areas that are infested with weeds. Tracks have been constructed through the rainforest areas on both headlands and through the Black Head Flora Reserve. Due to the fragile nature of the reserves, any disturbance can open the canopy, allow sunlight to reach the forest floor and cause weed infestation. To avoid damaging the reserves, please keep to the track. Do not collect wood or light fires in reserves or on the beach.

Aboriginal Heritage

The Worimi and Biripi people have a long association with the Hallidays Point area. There are many sites of Aboriginal heritage and culture in the area, including shell middens, rock shelters, burial caves and scar trees.

Hallidays Point has an abundance of bush food including wombat berry, lilly pilly, scrambling lilly, wallabies, goannas, shellfish and fish. Aboriginal people used local plants such as cunjevoi, red ash, paper-bark and brush kurrajong for medicines and other traditional uses.

Geology

Headlands at Black Head and Red Head were formed from shales, interbedded with thin layers of volcanic ash. The shale is the result of billions of tonnes of mud carried by floods to an ancient sea floor, hundreds of millions of years ago, in the Upper Devonian Age. The presence of volcanic ash and land plant fossils in the shale beds indicate the area was once a large bay or strait, with volcanos on the mainland or nearby islands, similar to the Bay of Islands in New Zealand.

Vegetation

The dominant vegetation community on the headlands at Black Head and Red Head is littoral (coastal) rainforest. It is recognised by its dense canopy and the way sunlight filters to the leafy forest floor. Littoral rainforests generally have a wind-sheared upper tree canopy and vary in height from one metre on the seaward side to ten metres or more in protected areas. Over 100 plant species have been identified in the rainforest

reserves and 50 of these are trees. Some of the more common canopy trees include tuckeroo, brush box, white banksia, rusty fig, grey ironbark, brush ironbark and maidens wattle. Smaller trees and shrubs include native rosella, sandpaper fig, python tree, silver croton, yellow tulip, lilly pilly, rosewood, veiny wilkea, and forest maple.

There are 25 vine species, including the rare milky corkwood vine. The three-leaved water vine, austral sarsaparilla and common silk pod are the main colonisers of gaps in the canopy. Cunjevoi, spider lilly, sickle and rasp ferns, native ginger, orange thorn bush, and a range of native grasses grow on the forest floor. The rare rainforest cassia *Senna acclinas*, a yellow flowering shrub, grows along the Black Head rainforest track.

Fauna

Red necked wallabies, goannas, echidnas, sugar gliders, ringtail possums, and many small mammals inhabit the rainforest reserves. Koalas are regularly sighted at Red Head. The range of vegetation supports an abundance of bird life: yellow robins, golden whistlers, grey fantails, white-throated tree-creepers and brown warblers live in the rainforest. The distinctive eastern whip bird can be heard foraging on the forest floor. Brush turkeys rake the forest floor to build nesting mounds, and a variety of heathland birds flit amongst the lower branches. Fruit-eating fig birds, cat birds and bower birds compete with lorikeets and king parrots for the figs and lilly pilly fruit on the forest's edge. Overhead, the white-bellied sea eagles and brahminy kites hunt. Gannets, gulls, and crested terns sweep the ocean for fish. Shags roost in paperbarks along the Black Head Lagoon and swamp hens, spoonbills and wood ducks live upstream in the wetlands.

Marine life

The rocky shores of Hallidays Point support a variety of marine species. The more common ones in the intertidal zone are the sea snails: periwinkles have small black and white spiralled shells; blue periwinkles have a small blue-grey shell; mulberry whelks have raised dark lumps; and black nerites have a rounded black shell that glistens when it is wet.

Limpets have a shell-like conical cap and use suction pressure to move very slowly across the rocks to graze on microscopic plants and sea weed. Barnacles are crustaceans that cement themselves to the rock and build a shell around them. They collect food with their hairy feet. The cartrut shell is a carnivorous whelk with deep parallel grooves in its shell. It has a siphon that protrudes through a small indentation at the base of the shell. The siphon sucks water over the equivalent of a nose enabling it to identify nearby prey. Sea weeds are multi-

celled algae. They get nutrients directly from the sea water and use sunlight for photosynthesis. Sea weeds attach to rocks by a “hold-fast”. If removed from a rock, they cannot re-attach themselves. Neptune’s necklace is a brown algae that is common in rock pools. The beads are full of air to keep the plant upright in water. Many minute and juvenile crustaceans and molluscs live underneath the sea weed.

Moor Creek

This walk starts next to the Ramada Diamond Beach Resort in a coastal heath swamp and then passes into a coastal swamp forest—mostly eucalypts, paperbarks and some distinctive cabbage palms—and then south along Moor Creek. A fork just north of the footbridge leads through the heath and back to the road. From the canoe launch at Moor Creek, an unformed track follows the east bank of Moor Creek north until it reaches Khappinghat Creek. The track is difficult to follow and impassable after rain. It is possible to canoe along Moor Creek to Khappinghat Creek, although the water level is often low and there are some obstacles. From the end of Moor Creek it is an easy one hour paddle through magnificent coastal scenery to Saltwater Lagoon.

Another walk starts at the Resort and follows an old sand-mining road to the north. Sandmining was undertaken along the coastal strip and ended in about 1995. The road goes most of the way to Saltwater Lagoon, but you need to walk the last part on the beach. It is exposed and hot in summer.

Diamond Beach to Seascape (Walk 1)

The southern beach access track at Diamond Beach winds through remnant littoral rainforest and crosses a small estuarine lagoon. At low tide, you can continue south along the beach and climb across beach rocks to reach Shelly Beach. Further south along the beach, stairs go up the escarpment and lead to a short walk and two impressive lookouts.

Red Head Rainforest Reserve and Shelly Beach (Walk 2)

The loop track starts from the end of Red Head Road and passes through littoral rainforest north to Shelly Beach. The jagged outcrops at Shelly Beach are the result of the action of salt spray on the clay component of the shale beds. The smoother, rounded outcrops are more characteristic of volcanic ash, which is not affected by salt spray. An iron mineral, chlorite, causes its greenish tinge. On the beach there are pebbles of andesite and grey lava rock speckled with white crystals of feldspar. Shelly Beach has a beautifully preserved raised pebble beach, dating from 5,000 years ago, when melting of polar ice caps raised the sea to a level three metres higher than it is today. The rock platform has abundant marine life.

Black Head Beach & Black Head Flora Reserve (Walk 3)

The 21 hectare Black Head Flora Reserve connects rainforest reserves at Black Head and Red Head. The native vegetation has high conservation value and supports a variety of plants and animals. The lagoon track starts from the picnic area at Black Head and is an easy level walk along the lagoon and through the park to the wetland reserve on Baywood Drive. This is a safe bicycle path for young children. Along this walk you will see mangroves, paperbarks, casuarinas, blackbutt, swamp mahogany and wetland grasses. Community groups planted rainforest plants along this path in 2003. The track continues through tall flooded gum, swamp mahogany, hard corkwood, paperbarks, burrawangs and cabbage palms and returns towards the centre of Black Head Beach. A self-guided leaflet is available from the Hallidays Point Library. Dogs are not allowed in the Flora Reserve.

Black Head Rainforest Reserve and Pebbly Beach (Walk 4)

The most northerly lookout on the Black Head Headland provides good views of a large rock platform with a dramatic sea-stack known as Razorback. At low tide you can reach the natural sea pool between the finger rocks. The earth's movements have tilted the layers of shale and volcanic ash rock so they now dip eastward under the sea. From the second lookout you can see into a chasm eroded by wave action on softer rock. The track from the Headland going south leads to Pebbly Beach, which has some small sea stacks and two clearly defined notches or caves cut by wave action. There are many small rock pools and a pretty, sandy beach. The track continues, rock hopping, around to Back Beach. Some easy climbing is involved but the rocks are sharp.

Across from the car park at Back Beach, the track follows a small estuarine lagoon and then goes up some steps to a wind-sheared brush box forest. The track wanders through beautiful littoral rainforest, finally reaching the Bowling Club car park. Some parts of this track have very dense vegetation that may be unsuitable for infants.

Hallidays Point Landcare Group

Hallidays Point Landcare Group meets regularly for working bees. Call Alana Parkins on (02) 6559 2979 for information. Visit www.hallidayspointinfo.com for more information about Hallidays Point Landcare Group.



Hallidays Point Walks

- 1 — Diamond Beach to Seascape
- 2 — Shelly Beach to Red Head Rainforest
- 3 — Black Head Beach & Flora Reserve
- 4 — Black Head Rainforest and Pebbly Beach
- No dogs allowed at any time



Car park
Lookouts

Diamond Beach

Diamond Beach Village

Car park
Lookout

Beach stairs

Lookouts

Seascape

Shelly Beach

Red Head
2

Red Head Rd

Car park
Lookout

Red Head Village

Black Head
Wetland Reserve

Black Head
Lagoon and
Flora Reserve
3

Black Head Rd

Black Head
Beach

Black Head SLSC
and ocean pool

Car park
picnic area

Car park
Lookouts
4

Black Head Village

Car park

Pebbly
Beach

4

Car parks

Back Beach

