Beginner’s Guide: Ulladulla to Burrill Lake

Gary Brown  |  November 2014  »  Feature Articles / New South Wales /

Ulladulla makes a great base for exploring local natural attractions such as Morton National Park, Lake Conjola to the north and Lake Burrill to the south. Nearby Meroo National Park has a beautiful coastline with access 5km from Ulladulla. An easy, 2km walking track passes through native flora in the South Pacific Heathland Reserve and onward, providing access to great views from Warden Head Lighthouse.

You can learn to surf here, go fishing, swimming and hiking. Local dive operators will show you the best of the underwater world in the crystal clear waters off the coast. Deep sea charters are also available, as well as whale-watching tours during the annual migration season. Eating fish and chips fresh from the Fishermen's Co-op on the wharf at Ulladulla Harbour is a popular pastime for locals and visitors alike.

Mollymook Beach to the north is a fabulous 2km stretch of golden sand between Bannister Point and the southern headland where Mollymook Golf Club is located.

The scenically beautiful township of Burrill Lake is located 5km south of Ulladulla, situated between the beach and the lake. Surrounded by natural bushland, its unspoilt beauty provides excellent fishing spots and safe boating, sailing and windsurfing. Boats, canoes, skis and kayaks are available for hire. Most of its shores retain their natural bushland and forest cover, and views west across the lake to Pigeon House Mountain create a beautiful natural setting.

The Princes Highway crosses the eastern arm of the lake only meters from the sea, but the lake’s main expanse reaches inland almost to the town of Milton, and cannot be seen from the highway.

1. Mollymook Beach

Mollymook Beach is located a few minutes north of Ulladulla and produces whiting and bream during the warmer months of the year, with the best baits being live beach worms and pipis. Autumn will see the salmon and tailor start to come in during those low light periods of early morning and late in the afternoon. The best baits are whole pilchards and garfish.

If you find that you are getting bites and the pilchards are getting chewed up, try changing from a set of ganged hooks to a single 1/0 and half a pilchard and you will be in with a chance of either a bream or trevally.

For the boat angler you could try trolling parallel to the surf and around the front of the north and south headland for kingfish, bonito, salmon and tailor. Sand flathead are also an option from the 25-40m depth.

2. The Golf Course

This is another headland that’s worth trolling parallel with for kingfish, bonito, salmon and tailor. Sand flathead are also an option from the 25-40m depth. Out wider on the broken shell and reef are you are in with a good chance of picking up a morwong, snapper, leatherjackets or pigfish on a paternoster rig.

3. Ulladulla Head

If you drive out to the lookout at Warden Head you will be able to park the car and walk down to the rock shelf below. Care does need to be taken when doing so. Once down here you can target bream, trevally, salmon, tailor, leatherjackets, drummer and luderick.

I recommend taking a sugar bag of bread for berley as that will increase your chances of getting the fish on the chew. Also, this area can cop a fair amount of swell so you will need to keep an eye out.

4. Northern Break Wall

This short break wall can at times produce a great run of luderick on a falling tide. You could also try spinning for tailor and salmon. Just in behind the break wall there is a ramp that’s worth a shot for bream at the top of the tide. Early morning or late afternoon seems to work the best.

5. The Pier

The Ulladulla harbour is a firm favourite for keen fishers and it’s popular with both residents and tourist alike, surrounded by a vast arrange of seafood restaurants and cafes. There are many activities available such as surfing, recreational fishing, boating, snorkelling and swimming.

The Ulladulla Seapool is located at the southern end of Ulladulla harbour and can be accessed via the boardwalk from the harbour side or from Wason Street. It’s a very popular spot as you can drive up to within metres of the edge. There’s a fair drop to the water so you should either take a long handle net or up your line breaking strain to 6kg to allow you to lift the fish.
Live yellowtail and slimy mackerel can be berleyed up here and then put under a bobby cork for tailor, salmon and the odd kingfish. The manmade retaining wall behind can be fished from, but you will need to work your way through the concrete block. I recommend that you suss out the best spots to fish from before you take your gear in.

6. Warden Head

Warden Head protrudes 1km to the east, with the sheltered Ulladulla Harbour to the north, while its southern side is well exposed to southerly waves. Along the 1km long southern junction of the head are four adjoining exposed beaches, all backed by steep slopes. The first beach is a 170m long pocket of sand bordered by converging 80m wide rock platforms, which leave a 100m wide gap in the middle for waves. These maintain a low tide terrace; however, the entire system is drained by a permanent rip through the rocky gap. It is backed by densely vegetated slopes and a bluff-top car park off the headland road.

7. Rennies Beach

Rennies Beach is located a few minutes south of Ulladulla and faces more towards the southeast. It’s a good spot to fish when the conditions are from the north. Whiting and bream can be targeted during the warmer months of the year, with the best baits being live beach worms and pipis. Autumn will see the salmon and tailor start to come in during those low light periods of early morning and late in the afternoon. The best baits are whole pilchards and garfish.

If you find that you are getting bites and the pilchards are getting chewed up, try changing from a set of ganged hooks to a single 1/0 and half a pilchard and you will be in with a chance of either a bream or trevally.

8. Burrill Beach

The township of Burrill offers windsurfing, canoeing, ocean and lake fishing, water skiing, mini golf, ocean and lake swimming, and leisure pursuits including bike tracks, picnic and BBQ facilities at the Lions Parks just south of the Bridge.

The middle section of beach itself is exposed to most weather conditions. Try fishing at the lake’s entrance for bream, whiting and flathead. The northern end is good for salmon, tailor and bream when the weather is from the north. Beach worms and pipis can be caught from this beach.

9. Dolphin Point

Dolphin Point is located about 5km south of Ulladulla and is surrounded by natural bushland. Its unspoilt beauty provides excellent fishing spots and safe boating, sailing and windsurfing in Burrill Lake.

Dolphin Point is a quiet village with some of the best views on the South Coast. The beaches are to the east of the highway where each road will take you to a tranquil beach where it is great to take a rest stop on your journey, or stay awhile and enjoy the serenity of the coastal views from picnic spots. From here you can also go rock fishing or walk to shore-based fishing in the entrance to Burrill Lake.

10. The Flats

The depth of the water from the bridge on the Princes Highway to the drop-off to the main basin of Burrill Lake is very shallow, but can be navigated in a boat by following the channel markers.

You have a combination of sand, broken rocks, broken oyster bars and ribbon weed. It’s best fished during the quieter times of the day. I found this to be a great spot to cast surface lures during the summer for bream, whiting and flathead at the top of the tide.

Luderick can be caught during the autumn to winter months, but you will need to make sure that you have fresh weed. I gather my weed in Sydney a day before and take it down with me.

11. The Drop-off

Just remember when fishing here that you don’t anchor in the way of boat traffic coming down the channel from the flats. Try live baiting with poddy mullet and pink nippers for bream, flathead, whiting, trevally, tailor and snapper on the run-up tide.

This same area is a great place to try trolling or casting hardbodied lures. Soft plastics also work a treat here.

12. The Bungalow Park Arm

In my experience, the best results for flathead, bream and whiting here have come from working the shallow edges with hardbodied lures, soft plastics and flies on a falling tide. You could also try anchoring up off one of the many points and laying out a berley trail. The best rig I have found to use here is the small ball sinker down onto the hook.

Pilchard, mullet, striped tuna, live worms and nippers will get the results that you require. You could also try using blades while drifting from one side to the other.

13. The Corner

The water off this point is very deep not far out from the shore. The shore has plenty of snags that hold bream, trevally and flathead. You
could try up in the back of the bay for mullet and whiting. It’s a great lure and soft plastic spot. Estuary perch have also been caught here in numbers.

14. Stony Creek

Care needs to be taken when travelling up here in a boat as the bottom depth does vary. A number of years ago I ended up high and dry here while travelling upstream. While I was getting my boat off the sand bar, my son Chris lured up a 72cm dusky flathead on a Mann’s Stretch 5.

If you slowly work your way upstream you are in with a good chance of mullet, garfish, bream, flathead or bass.

Facts

BOAT RAMPS

Ulladulla (North): Rotary Park Crescent St - all boats
Ulladulla (South): Harbour via Wason St - all boats
Kings Point: Ski Club – Edward Ave - all boats, no yachts (daily tariff)
Burrill Lake: Kendall Crescent Burrill Lake - all boats
Burrill Lake: Maria Ave Burrill Lake - all boats
Burrill Lake: Moore St Burrill Lake - natural ramp, cats/skiffs only

Facts

ACCOMODATION

Dolphin Point Tourist Park

Burrill Lakes Tourist Park

Big4 Holiday Park
bungalow-park.nsw.big4.com.au

Facts

TACKLE SHOPS

Robs Bait ‘n’ Tackle
Prince Hwy, Burrill Lake
Ph: 02 4454 3350

Early Bait and Tackle
Images

Mollymook Beach at times may look featureless, but don't let that fool you. It can be one of the best beaches in the region.

Not bad for an hour's fishing off Warden Headland with a 1/0 hook, no 3 ball sinker and mullet strips for bait.
The southern rock platform off Mollymook is fairly low to the water, and care should be taken when fishing off here. A decent cast will get you into bream and trevally country.

This little beach is a great place to fish in the afternoon on a very high tide. I like to use a strip of mullet on a 1/0 hook with a 000 sinker.

I prefer to peel my prawns when fishing off the rocks. It seems to provide a better hook-up.
The Pier has easy parking that is close to your fishing spot. In the distance you can see the boat ramp and the northern break wall that at times hold good schools of luderick.