

EXPLORING THE MARSHES

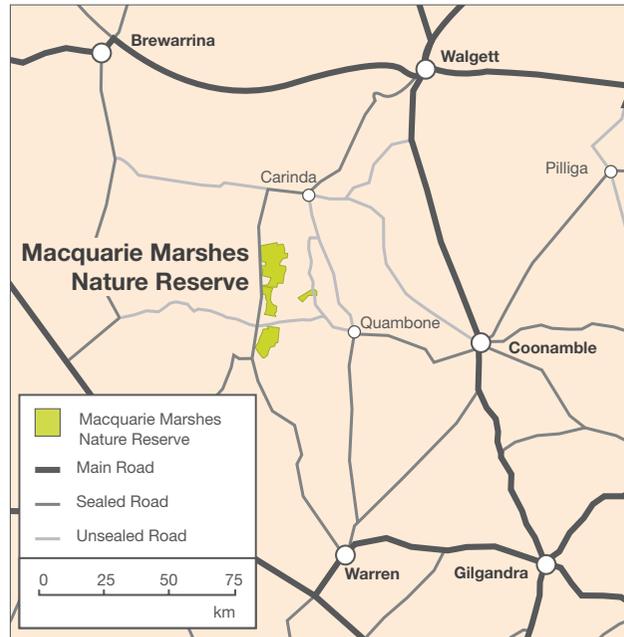
The Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve is surrounded by private land and has no public access. However, there are still opportunities to discover the value of this wetland ecosystem:

- An observation platform overlooking private property is located along the Gibson's way near Terrigal Creek. This provides visitors with the opportunity to overlook part of the marsh system during wet or dry times with a chance to view wetland birds and animals in their natural environment. The Monkeygar Crossing further to the west of Gibson's Way also passes through some good examples of the wetlands and is a great location to view wildlife during wet periods.
- Discovery tours can be organised for schools and private groups throughout the year by contacting The Pilliga Forest Discovery Centre on 02 6843 4011.
- An open day is held once a year where National Parks staff take members of the public on guided walks and tours through the Nature Reserve. This is usually held on the October Labour Day and is dependent on weather conditions.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND THE MARSHES

- Carry plenty of water and food and stay with your vehicle in the event of a breakdown.
- Take your rubbish with you when you leave.
- For the protection of plants and animals, please do not use soap, detergents or other chemicals in or near water bodies.
- Roads can become impassable after rain so it is best to check road conditions before setting out.
- Reduce your speed for the conditions and be aware of sand, potholes and creek crossings.
- Protect yourself against mosquitoes, particularly during times of flood.
- Watch out for kangaroos, emus and other animals, particularly at dusk and dawn.
- Mobile phone reception is unreliable. In an emergency dial 000 or 112 on a mobile with limited service.

Photo: S. Tucker/OEH



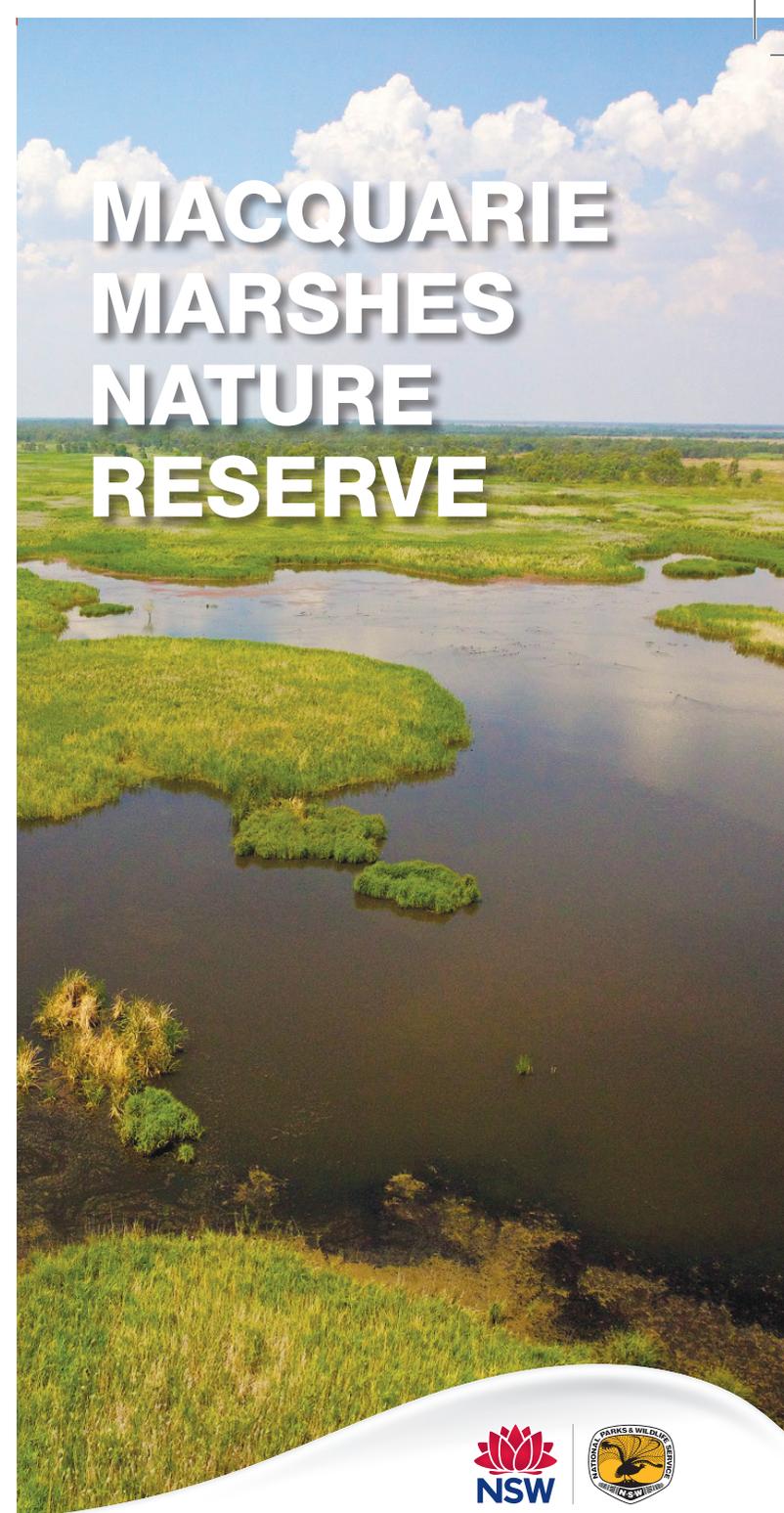
GENERAL INQUIRIES:

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MACQUARIE MARSHES NATURE RESERVE



nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

ABOUT THE MARSHES

The Macquarie Marshes is one of the largest remaining inland semi-permanent wetlands in south-eastern Australia. It encompasses extensive areas of reed swamp, water couch grasslands, river red gum woodlands and floodplains that cover an area of 200,000 hectares. Of this the Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve makes up 21,927 hectares, most of which is listed under the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands of International Importance. The remaining 89 per cent is mainly freehold land managed for agricultural purposes.

A DYNAMIC ECOSYSTEM

The Macquarie Marshes are located in semi-arid Australia and as a result experience boom and bust cycles of severe drought and flooding. The area of wetland varies from remnant waterholes in severe droughts to expansive floodplains and swampland that teem with life during major floods.

Often referred to as the kidneys of the environment, wetlands play an important role in maintaining the health of nearby aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems by trapping sediment, recycling nutrients and filtering water.

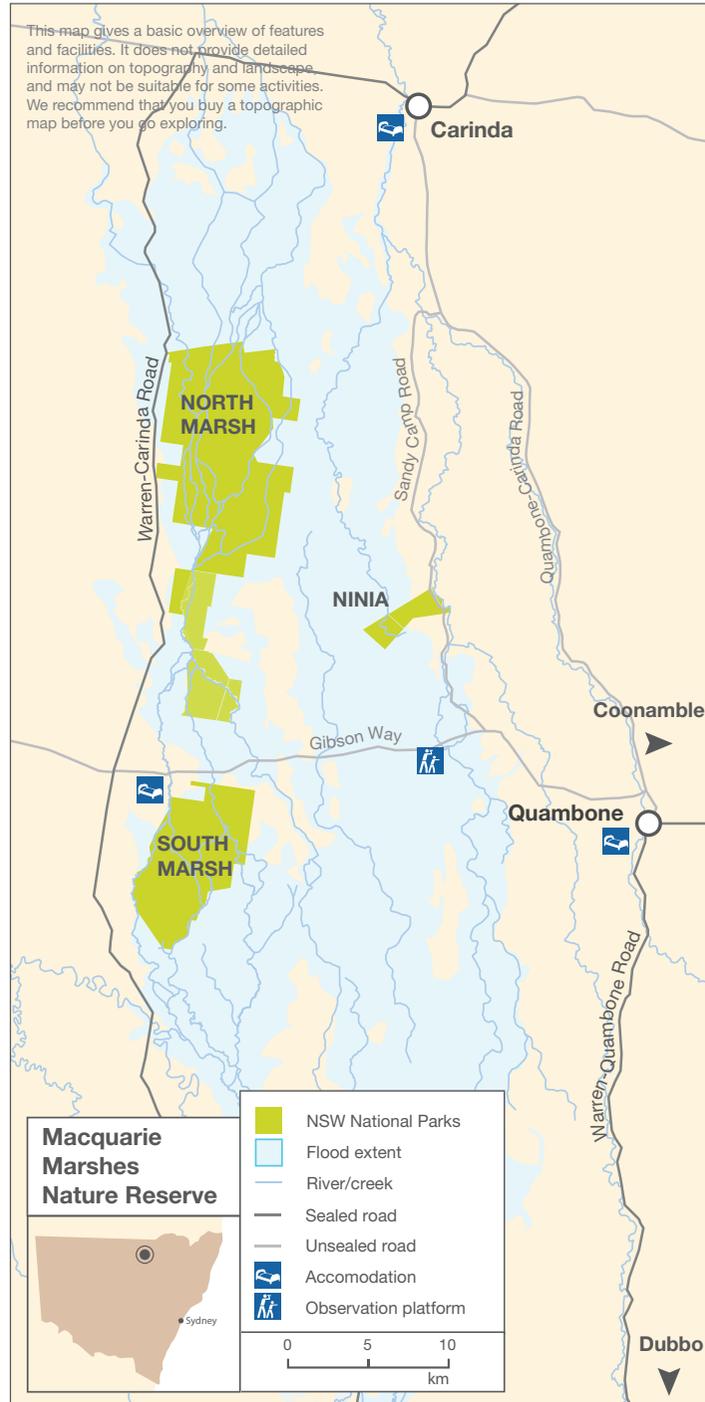
Photo: Willancorah Swamp, N. Brookhouse/OEH



ABORIGINAL AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE

For thousands of years the Macquarie Marshes have provided plentiful natural resources to the Wailwan (also spelt Weilwan) people. Remains of Aboriginal use can be found in the form of scarred trees, stone flakes and unusual earth (oven) mounds.

The colonial explorer John Oxley was the first known European to visit the Marshes, in 1818. Since that time the area has been progressively subdivided, settled and grazed under occupational licences.



ROADS

The Warren-Carinda Road is sealed. Most other roads, including the Gibson's Way and Quambone-Carinda Road, are 2WD unsealed roads. These roads can become impassable during floods or after rain.



WILDLIFE

The Macquarie Marshes is particularly outstanding for its value as one of the most important breeding sites for nesting waterbirds in Australia. A total of 77 species of waterbird can be found in the Marshes, including threatened species such as the magpie goose, brolga, Australasian bittern, freckled duck and blue-billed duck. It also provides important habitat for migratory birds such as sand pipers, godwits and snipe.

Due to the reasonably intact woodlands, the Marshes is inhabited by 156 species of bird other than waterbirds, including the square-tailed kite, barking owl, hooded robin, varied sittella and glossy black-cockatoo.

The Marshes also provides important habitat for many species of fish, turtles, lizards, snakes, frogs, mammals and invertebrates.



Photos: Cover: Macquarie Marshes, J. Smith.
Top: Egret Chicks, D. Love/OEH. Bottom: Club Rush, T. Hosking/OEH