



Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary

Estuarine wetlands are amazing places. Here life thrives in the most extreme conditions on land inundated by seasonal freshwater floods and salty tides.

Prior to European settlement many natural resources were gathered from mangroves and used by Indigenous peoples in a sustainable way. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities depended almost entirely on fish and shell fish of the mangrove ecosystems for their subsistence. Many plants provided a resource for medicinal use.

For example the fruit of the Grey Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*) was eaten and the bark used to treat stingray stings and make shields. Mangrove timbers had long been used to construct canoes, paddles, spears and boomerangs.

In the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary at Bli Bli on the Sunshine Coast you can explore the exceptional natural values of the mangrove ecosystems which continue to provide important habitat for commercial and recreational fish species. Mangroves also offer feeding, roosting, breeding and recuperation areas for birds, crustaceans, molluscs, worms and insects.



Mangrove Fern

How to get there

Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary is located on the Maroochy River in Bli Bli; the route is signposted with Maroochy Wetland Sanctuary fingerboard signs.

From Bli Bli Road turn on to Willis Road travelling approx 375 metres before turning into Lefoes Road, continue on 660 metres to Sports Road which is currently unsealed.

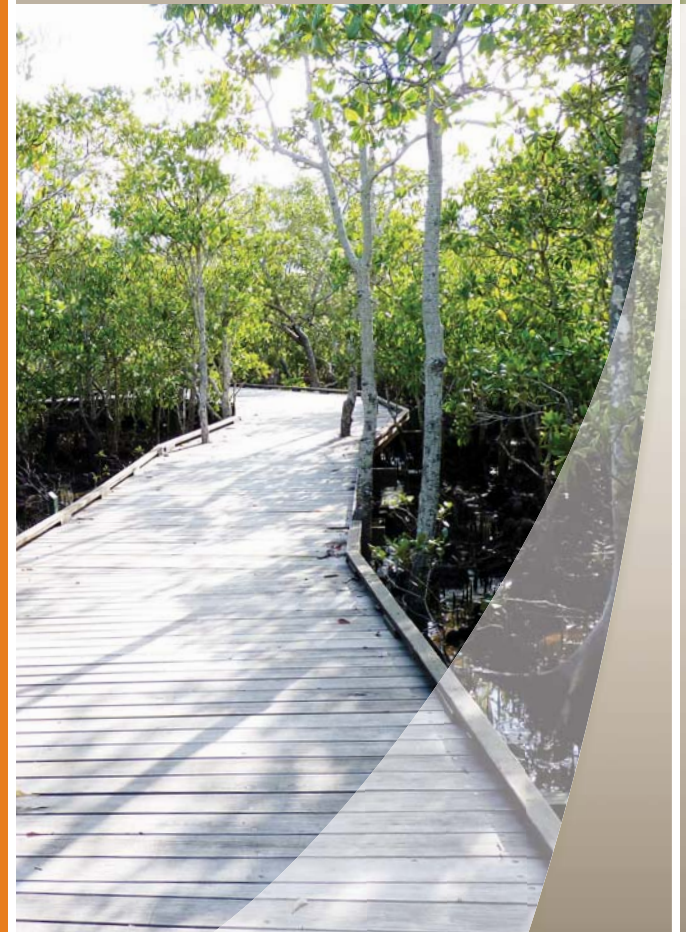
The Sanctuary is at the end of Sports Road on the right. Car parking adjoins the education centre and reserve entrance.

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Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Reserve information



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Mangrove species

There are five mangrove species growing within the sanctuary:

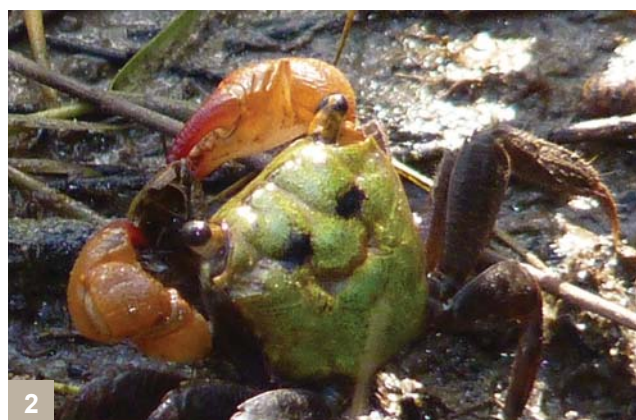
- ▶ Grey Mangrove (*Avicennia marina*) with its peg-like pneumatophores on their roots and grey on the underside of the leaves
- ▶ River Mangrove (*Aegiceras corniculatum*) a shrub-like mangrove with no obvious roots and spoon shaped leaves, often with salt crystals on the surface
- ▶ Orange Mangrove (*Bruguiera gymnorhiza*) with 'knob' roots, shaped like knobby bent knees
- ▶ Milky Mangrove (*Excoecaria agallocha*) has poisonous milky sap which also gives it the other common name of Blind-your-eye
- ▶ Red Mangrove (*Rhizophora stylosa*) the least common of the Sanctuary mangroves with their stilt-like prop roots
- ▶ Mangrove Fern (*Acrostichum speciosum*) a tall robust plant forming dense clumps throughout the tidal flats.

Crab species

The mudflats which host the mangroves also support an active population of crab species which include:

- ▶ Fiddler Crabs (*Uca coarctata*) usually found on mud banks close to shade. Adult males have one very large orange claw used for signalling or threatening
- ▶ Red-fingered Marsh Crabs (*Parasesarma erythodactyla*) have a square-shaped green shell or carapace
- ▶ Semaphore Crabs (*Heloecius cordiformis*) have equally sized purple claws, and eyes on long stalks. Males use their claws to signal
- ▶ Scarlet Three-spined Mangrove Crabs (*Neosarmatium trispinosum*) found in large holes under Orange Mangroves. Black with red claws and larger than most intertidal crabs, they are mostly a nocturnal foliage eater
- ▶ Mud Crabs (*Scylla serrata*) largest of the crabs occasionally can be seen during the day swimming in the shallows.

To obtain the best view of these crab species visit at low tide when the mud flats are exposed.



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Other species

Other wildlife species that make the Wetlands Sanctuary their home include a diversity of birds such as Eastern Yellow Robin, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, White-faced Heron and Brahminy Kite and many butterflies such as the Blue Tiger, Black Jezebel, Lemon Migrant, Orchard Swallowtail or the Varied Eggfly.



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The Bilai Environmental Education Centre is a Department of Education and Training school which is based at the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary. Bilai EEC provides environmental programs for state school students covering topics regarding wetlands and estuarine studies, catchment analyses and local ecosystems investigations including dunes, rocky foreshores and rainforests.

The Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary at Bli Bli is managed by the Sunshine Coast Council in co-operation with the Bilai Environmental Education Centre and the Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc., a community volunteer group. The Sanctuary is open every day and the information centre is staffed by support group volunteers each Sunday. Access is provided by extensive walking tracks and boardwalks which lead from the Information Centre down to the floating pontoon on the Maroochy River.

Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Reserve map



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4. Blue Tongue 5. Fiddler Crab
6. River Mangrove flowers and salt on leaves

Health and safety warning

Best times to visit are from May to October as the Wetlands Sanctuary is a mosquito habitat. Application of insect repellent in addition to appropriate clothing and footwear is highly recommended for your personal safety and enjoyment.

For additional information

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Maroochy Wetlands Sanctuary Support Group Inc.
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Bilal Environmental Education Centre
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- (A) Bird hide
- (B) Crab viewing platform
- (C) Shelter
- (D) Pontoon
- (E) Education centre
- River boardwalk (950 m one way)
- Fig walk (52 m return)
- Birdhide loop (220 m one way)
- Crab platform loop (40 m one way)
- Western boundary track (665 m return)