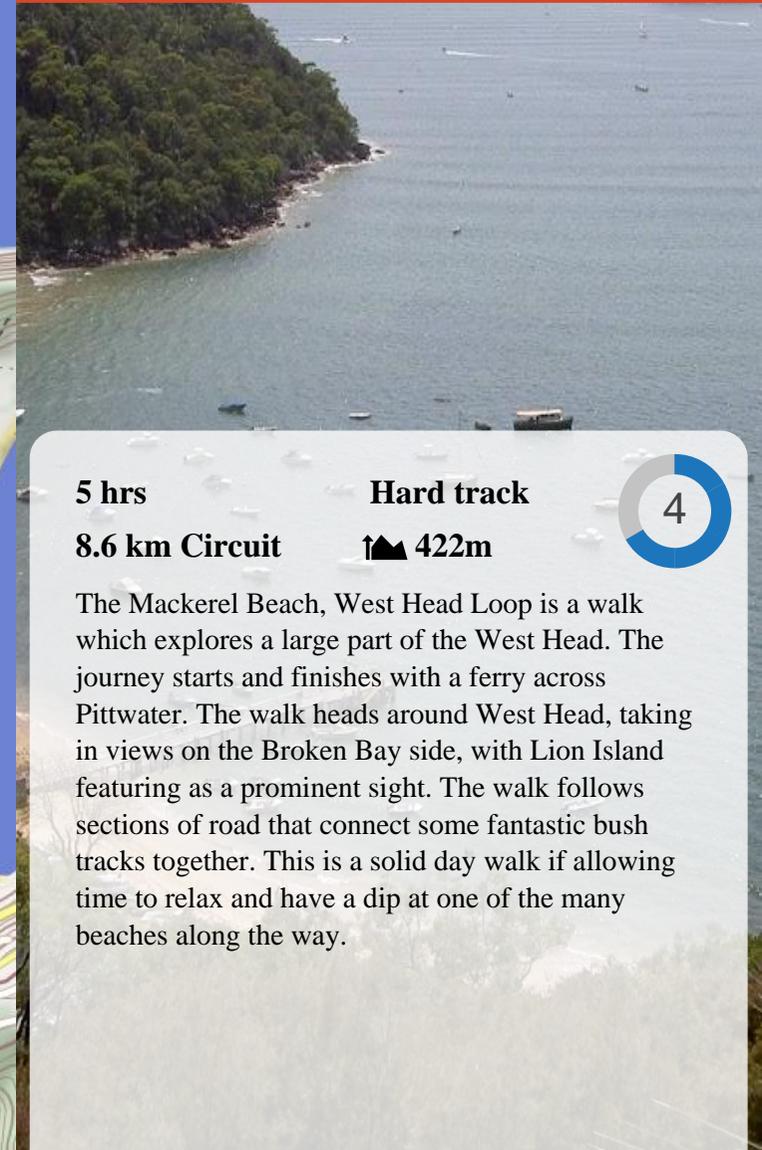
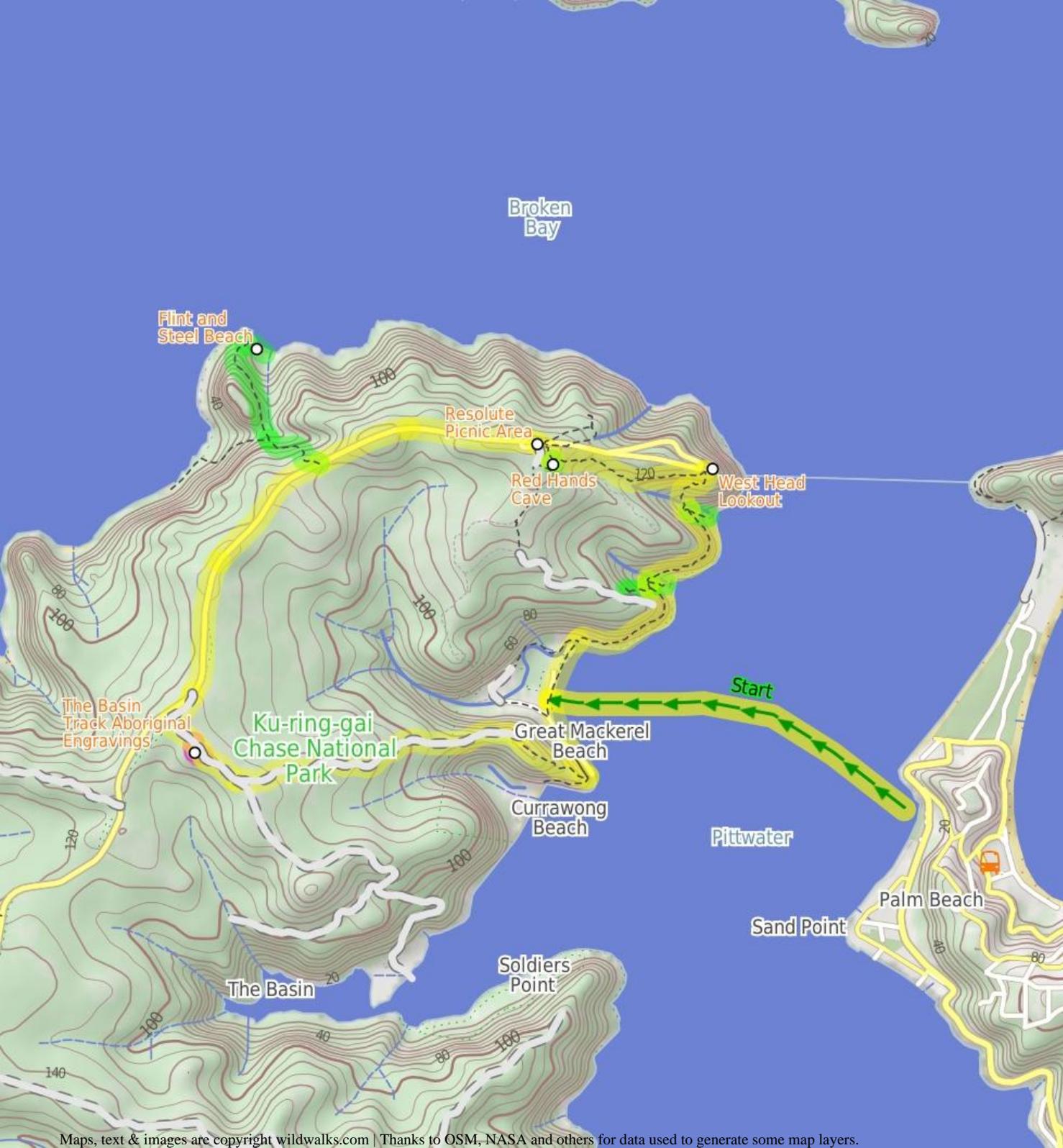


Mackerel Beach, West Head Loop



5 hrs

Hard track

8.6 km Circuit

422m

4

The Mackerel Beach, West Head Loop is a walk which explores a large part of the West Head. The journey starts and finishes with a ferry across Pittwater. The walk heads around West Head, taking in views on the Broken Bay side, with Lion Island featuring as a prominent sight. The walk follows sections of road that connect some fantastic bush tracks together. This is a solid day walk if allowing time to relax and have a dip at one of the many beaches along the way.

Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

West Head Lookout

West Head Lookout, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is a large sandstone viewing area with many interpretive signs. The view spans across the Hawkesbury River to Lion Island, Patonga Sport and Recreation, Box Headland and over to the Barrenjoey Headland. The lookout has a number of bench seats and a low stone fence.

Red Hands Cave

Red Hands Cave, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, is a small rock overhang just near Resolute Picnic Area. The red hands are made by ochre, clay, being blown over an outspread hand. This Aboriginal rock art has been given an estimation of approximately 2000 years in age.

Resolute Picnic Area

Resolute picnic area, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, is a large grassed area with benches, shelter, interpretive signs, electric BBQ's and an environmentally-friendly toilet block. The picnic area does not have drinking water, but does have a pay phone and wheelchair-accessible bathroom with baby-changing area. Resolute picnic area is a great place for lunch, with Red Hands Cave, West Head and Resolute Beach and West Head Lookout tracks starting from the picnic area. The picnic area has adequate parking and a bus turn-around area.

Flint and Steel Beach

Flint and Steel Beach, Ku-ring-gai National Park, is a small north-east facing stretch of sand. The beach is hemmed in by prominent headlands on either side and backed by a grassy hill. A seat on the hill lends views over the Hawkesbury River to Patonga and Lion Island, with Box Head in the background.

The Basin Track Aboriginal Engravings

The Basin Track Aboriginal Engravings, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, is a large rock surface scattered with Aboriginal engravings. The engravings depict men, fish, hopping wallabies and a club. The engravings are marked with interpretive signs which outline where on the rocks the engravings are and how they were made.

Before You walk

Bushwalking is fun and a wonderful way to enjoy our natural places. Sometimes things go bad, with a bit of planning you can increase your chance of having an enjoyable and safer walk. Before setting off on your walk check

- 1) Weather Forecast ([BOM District](#))
- 2) Fire Dangers ([Greater Sydney Region](#))
- 3) Park Alerts ([Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park](#))
- 4) Research the walk to check your party has the skills, fitness and equipment required
- 5) Agree to stay as a group and not leave anyone to walk solo

Think before you TREK

The 'Think before you TREK' program developed by NSW Police & NPWS promotes the benefits of planning ahead for your bushwalking trip by using an easy to remember acronym:

- T** Take adequate supplies of food, water, navigation and first aid equipment.
- R** Register your planned route and tell friends and family when you expect to return.
- E** Emergency beacon (PLB's) should be carried on walks with significant gaps in mobile coverage (check terrain profile).
- K** Keep to your planned route and follow the map and walking trails.

Topo Maps

The maps provided on wildwalks are helpful, but there are times where you may need maps covering a broader area. Maps that cover this walk include;

1:25 000 Map Series:91301N BROKEN BAY

1:40 000 Map Series:CMA Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park Tourist Map

1:100 000 Map Series:9130 SYDNEY

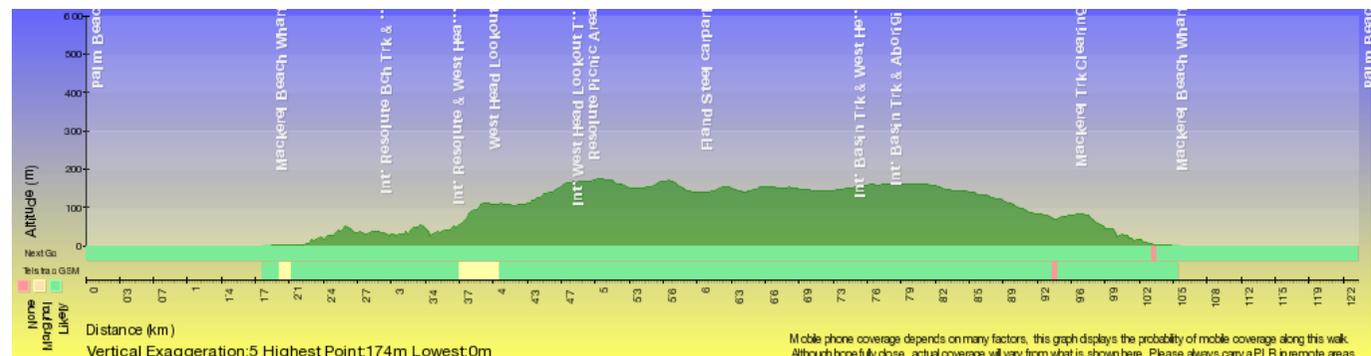
Grade

This walk has been graded using the AS 2156.1-2001. The overall grade of the walk is determined by the highest classification along the whole track.



Grade 4/6
Hard track

Length	8.6 km Circuit
Time	5 hrs
Quality of track	Rough track, where fallen trees and other obstacles are likely (4/6)
Signs	Minimal directional signs (4/6)
Experience Required	Some bushwalking experience recommended (3/6)
Weather	Weather generally has little impact on safety (1/6)
Infrastructure	Limited facilities (such as cliffs not fenced, significant creeks not bridged) (4/6)



Mobile phone coverage depends on many factors, this graph displays the probability of mobile coverage along this walk. Although hope fully close, actual coverage will vary from what is shown here. Please always carry a PLB in remote areas.

Are you ready to have fun?

Please ensure you and your group are well prepared and equipped for all possible hazards and delays. Check park closures, weather information and Fire Danger Rating before setting out. Optional side trips and alternate routes noted are not included in this walk overall grade, length or time estimate. Please allow extra time for resting and exploring areas of interest. The authors, staff and owners of wildwalks take care in preparing this information but will not accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury you may experience. Please take care, have fun - Happy Walking.

Getting there You can get to Palm Beach (gps: -33.5957, 151.3191) by car or bus. Car: Parking fees apply in the area.

This is a circuit, so you will finish back at the start.

Find up to date and more information including; travel directions, weather, park closures and walker feedback at <http://wild.tl/mbwhl>

0 | Palm Beach

(1.9 km 28 mins) From the Palm Beach ferry terminal, the walk uses the ferry to cross Pittwater to the Mackerel Beach wharf. After getting off the ferry, walk goes to the beach end of the wharf. The Palm Beach Ferry service operates hourly from 9am to about 8pm check their timetable for more info. The ferry starts at Palm Beach and goes via Bennett's, Bonnie Doon, The basin, Currawong then Mackerel. PH: 9974 2411 [More info.](#)

1.89 | Mackerel Beach Wharf

(1 km 25 mins) Turn right: From the wharf, the walk heads along the beach (keeping the water to your right) for approximately 300m, to the only palm trees on this end of the beach. Below the palm trees is a boulder with a black arrow painted on it.

Continue straight: From the palm trees and boulder painted with a black arrow, this walk heads up the hill into the bush, away from the beach. The track climbs to pass a 'Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park' sign before meandering along the hillside in an easterly direction, up the hill for approximately 400m. The track then rounds the headland to lead beneath a rocky headland for some time to a signposted intersection.

2.9 | Optional sidetrip to Cave

(140 m 5 mins) Turn left: From the intersection, this walk heads up a staircase for approximately 30m. The track then turns after the set of stairs. The track leads up the hill to the signposted intersection, with the cave to the right of the track in the cliffs.

Veer right: From the intersection, this walk heads towards the rock formations, following the hillside. The track then enters an overhang of a cave. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Turn left .

2.9 | Int. Resolute Bch Trk and Mackerel Bch Trk

(40 m 1 mins) Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Resolute' Beach arrow along the hillside to an un-signposted intersection.

2.94 | Optional sidetrip to Resolute Beach

(100 m 3 mins) Turn right: From the intersection, this walk heads down the hill towards the water, following the creek line to the beach. The track winds down the hill for approximately 30m to a small creek waterfall. The track is hidden in parts by grasses for approximately 20m before it heads down a few flights of stairs to where the track reaches the beach. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Turn right.

2.94 | Int. Resolute Bch Trk and Mackerel Bch Trk

(630 m 20 mins) Veer left: From the intersection, this walk keeps the water on the right of the track as it follows the hillside around through a creek. The track then turns right, following the coast. The track rises up the hill closer to

the cliffline as it heads around a spur. When passing this spur, a gun emplacement is passed (below to the right of the track). The track continues for approximately 200m, undulating around the hillside to the intersection with some steps on the right (which go down to West Head Beach).

3.57 | Optional sidetrip to West Head Beach

(100 m 3 mins) Turn right: From the intersection, this walk heads down the staircases to the beach, approximately 100m below. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Veer right.

3.57 | Int. West Head Beach and West Head Lookout

(350 m 13 mins) Veer left: From the intersection, this walk heads up the hill, keeping the water to the right of the track. The walk then turns up two flights of stairs. These staircases pass a small creek waterfall on the right, and a prominent overhang on the left. The track then continues to climb up the ridge, with many sections of cut rock steps. In time, the walk flattens out and continues past an informal, unfenced lookout on a rock landing approximately 100m before this walk reaches the stone-fenced West Head Lookout.

3.92 | West Head Lookout

West Head Lookout, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is a large sandstone viewing area with many interpretive signs. The view spans across the Hawkesbury River to Lion Island, Patonga Sport and Recreation, Box Headland and over to the Barrenjoey Headland. The lookout has a number of bench seats and a low stone fence.

3.92 | West Head Lookout

(820 m 20 mins) Turn left: From West Head Lookout, this walk follows the sign to 'Resolute Picnic Area' along a bush track, which keeps the hill above on the right. The track continues along the hillside to pass a sign pointing to 'Resolute Picnic Area' before the track climbs up steps. The track passes a creek on the left and rock formations on the right as the steps lead to the signposted 'Red Hands Cave' intersection.

4.74 | Optional sidetrip to Red Hands Cave

(20 m) Turn left: From the intersection, the walk heads down the hill, following the rocky outcrop to the right of the track. The walk follows this for approximately 30m to the interpretation signs for Red Hands Cave. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Continue straight.

4.74 | Red Hands Cave

Red Hands Cave, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, is a small rock overhang just near Resolute Picnic Area. The red hands are made by ochre, clay, being blown over an outspread hand. This Aboriginal rock art has been given an estimation of approximately 2000 years in age.

4.74 | Int. West Head Lookout Trk and Red Hands Cave Trk

(130 m 3 mins) Turn right: From the intersection, the walk heads along the rocky outcrop keeping it on the left as it heads up the stairs for approximately 30m into Resolute Picnic Area.

4.87 | Resolute Picnic Area

Resolute picnic area, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, is a large grassed area with benches, shelter, interpretive signs, electric BBQ's and an environmentally-friendly toilet block. The picnic area does not have drinking water, but does have a pay phone and wheelchair-accessible bathroom with baby-changing area. Resolute picnic area is a great place for lunch, with Red Hands Cave, West Head and Resolute Beach and West Head Lookout tracks starting from the picnic area. The picnic area has adequate parking and a bus

turn-around area.

4.87 | Resolute Picnic Area

(1.1 km 24 mins) Turn right: From the intersection, the walk heads away from 'Resolute Day Visitor Area', keeping it behind and to the left. The walk continues to undulate and wind along the road for approximately 600m, to the unsignposted track on the left, marked by a green metal gate. Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads up the hill towards the 'Crest' road sign. The walk continues down the steep hill to the signposted intersection of 'Flint and Steel' car park.

5.97 | Optional sidetrip to Flint and Steel beach

(1.1 km 29 mins) Veer right: From the back of the car park, the walk follows the 'Flint and Steel Track' sign along the bush track heading down through the bush. The walk drops down some stairs and turns right at the old 'Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park' sign, then left down the side of the hill. After about 100m, the walk continues down a set of stairs and then down the bush track to the signposted intersection.

Veer right: From intersection, this walk follows the 'Flint and Steel Beach 700m' arrow through a palm grove, along the ridge, with views across Hawkesbury River to Lion Island. The track runs parallel to rock formations on the left before winding its way through the trees and down the boardwalk, with the large rocks to the left. Soon the track heads through some pine trees and comes to an intersection of a bush track, near some large boulders on the left.

Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the track heading straight down the hill towards the beach, splitting for a about 10m before coming to a rock shelf above the waterline. From here, the track turns right and follows this rock shelf for about 20m, onto Flint and Steel Beach. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Turn sharp right.

5.97 | Flint and Steel Beach

Flint and Steel Beach, Ku-ring-gai National Park, is a small north-east facing stretch of sand. The beach is hemmed in by prominent headlands on either side and backed by a grassy hill. A seat on the hill lends views over the Hawkesbury River to Patonga and Lion Island, with Box Head in the background.

5.97 | Flint and Steel carpark

(1.5 km 27 mins) Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads up the smaller hill, keeping the Flint and Steel car park to the right. The walk winds along the road for some time before coming to an area where old metal fence posts mark the intersection on the right-hand side of the road. Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads south along West Head Road, keeping the metal fence poles behind and to the right. The track continues to wind down the road for approximately 700m to meet the Basin car park and intersection.

7.44 | Int. Basin Trk and West Head Rd

(360 m 7 mins) Veer left: From the car park, this walk follows the management trail around the green gate, keeping West Head Rd on the right. The walk continues along the trail, which tends to the left, and soon comes to a signposted intersection with the 'Aboriginal Engravings' track on the right.

7.81 | Alternate Route Int. Basin Trk and Aboriginal Engr

(110 m 2 mins) Turn right: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Aboriginal Engravings' sign into the heath and away from the management trail. The track tends left, to a ramp after approximately 10m. The track follows the wooden edging over the rock surface, between the engravings, heading to the signposted intersection on the management trail again. Now

Veer right to rejoin the main walk .

7.81 | The Basin Track Aboriginal Engravings

The Basin Track Aboriginal Engravings, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, is a large rock surface scattered with Aboriginal engravings. The engravings depict men, fish, hopping wallabies and a club. The engravings are marked with interpretive signs which outline where on the rocks the engravings are and how they were made.

7.81 | Int. Basin Trk and Aboriginal Engraving Trk Entry

(1.8 km 33 mins) Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads south up the hill (keeping the engravings on the right) to the next signposted intersection with the 'Aboriginal Engravings' track on the right.

Continue straight: From the intersection, the walk winds gently uphill along the management trail, keeping the engravings track initially on the right. The management trail then comes to the intersection with the signposted 'Mackerel service trail' on the left.

Veer left: From the intersection, this walk heads towards the sea, following the arrow sign 'Mackerel Service Trail'. The track meanders down the wide spur for approximately 1km, to then lead along a narrower area of the spur and into a saddle. The track continues to undulate to a clearing with a view over Mackerel Beach and Pittwater Bay.

9.59 | Mackerel Trk Clearing

(900 m 20 mins) Veer right: From the intersection, this walk follows the ridge down towards the sea. The track winds down the ridge, passing numerous large green water tanks to the left of the track, as the walk continues for approximately 50m to a lookout on a large boulder. The track heads down the left side of the boulder, winding steeply down the hillside to houses. The walk then leads to a small gate on the track in front of a brown wooden house.

Turn left: From the gate, this walk heads through the gate, then winds between and under the houses for approximately 200m, coming to a gate before the beach.

Veer left: From the gate, this walk heads onto the beach and continues for approximately 300m across the beach to the wharf in the middle of the beach.

10.49 | Mackerel Beach Wharf

(1.9 km 28 mins) Turn right: From Mackerel Beach wharf, this walk uses the ferry to cross Pittwater to the Palm Beach wharf. After arriving at the Palm Beach wharf, the walk goes into the car park. The Palm Beach Ferry service operates hourly from 9am to about 8pm. Check their timetable for more info. The ferry starts at Palm Beach and goes via Bennett's, Bonnie Doon, The basin, Currawong then Mackerel. PH: 9974 2411 [More info.](#)





Summary navigation sheet for the Mackerel Beach, West Head Loop



km	From	Up/Dwn	Length	Initial directions (Use full tracknotes and maps for more detail)
0.00	Palm Beach -33.5957,151.3191 (GR Broken Bay, 440814)	2 0	1.9 km 28 mins	From the Palm Beach ferry terminal, the walk uses the ferry to cross Pittwater to the Mackerel Beach wharf.
1.89	Mackerel Beach Wharf -33.5904,151.3008 (GR Broken Bay, 423820)	90 -53	1 km 25 mins	Turn right: From the wharf, the walk heads along the beach (keeping the water to your right) for approximately 300m, to the only palm trees on this end of the beach.
2.90	Int. Resolute Bch Trk and Mackerel Bch Trk -33.585,151.306 (GR Broken Bay, 428826)	47 -2	140 m 5 mins	Optional sidetrip to Cave. Turn left: From the intersection, this walk heads up a staircase for approximately 30m.
2.90	Int. Resolute Bch Trk and Mackerel Bch Trk -33.585,151.306 (GR Broken Bay, 428826)	1 -6	40 m 1 mins	Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Resolute' Beach arrow along the hillside to an un-signposted intersection.
2.94	Int. Resolute AND West Head Beach Tracks -33.5847,151.3059 (GR Broken Bay, 428826)	0 -25	100 m 3 mins	Optional sidetrip to Resolute Beach. Turn right: From the intersection, this walk heads down the hill towards the water, following the creek line to the beach.
2.94	Int. Resolute Bch Trk and Mackerel Bch Trk -33.5847,151.3059 (GR Broken Bay, 428826)	76 -66	630 m 20 mins	Veer left: From the intersection, this walk keeps the water on the right of the track as it follows the hillside around through a creek.
3.57	Int. West Head Beach and West Head Lookout -33.5812,151.308 (GR Broken Bay, 430830)	0 -33	100 m 3 mins	Optional sidetrip to West Head Beach. Turn right: From the intersection, this walk heads down the staircases to the beach, approximately 100m below.
3.57	Int. West Head Beach and West Head Lookout -33.5812,151.308 (GR Broken Bay, 430830)	76 -5	350 m 13 mins	Veer left: From the intersection, this walk heads up the hill, keeping the water to the right of the track.
3.92	West Head Lookout -33.5793,151.3088 (GR Broken Bay, 430832)	70 -19	820 m 20 mins	Turn left: From West Head Lookout, this walk follows the sign to 'Resolute Picnic Area' along a bush track, which keeps the hill above on the right.
4.74	Int. West Head Lookout Trk and Red Hands Cave Trk -33.5787,151.3009 (GR Broken Bay, 423833)	0 -1	20 m	Optional sidetrip to Red Hands Cave. Turn left: From the intersection, the walk heads down the hill, following the rocky outcrop to the right of the track.
4.74	Int. West Head Lookout Trk and Red Hands Cave Trk -33.5787,151.3009 (GR Broken Bay, 423833)	6 -1	130 m 3 mins	Turn right: From the intersection, the walk heads along the rocky outcrop keeping it on the left as it heads up the stairs for approximately 30m into Resolute Picnic Area.
4.87	Resolute Picnic Area -33.5779,151.3001 (GR Broken Bay, 422834)	28 -56	1.1 km 24 mins	Turn right: From the intersection, the walk heads away from 'Resolute Day Visitor Area', keeping it behind and to the left.
5.97	Flint and Steel carpark -33.5789,151.2888 (GR Broken Bay, 412832)	36 -173	1.1 km 29 mins	Optional sidetrip to Flint and Steel beach. Veer right: From the back of the car park, the walk follows the 'Flint and Steel Track' sign along the bush track heading down through the bush.
5.97	Flint and Steel carpark -33.5789,151.2888 (GR Broken Bay, 412832)	36 -25	1.5 km 27 mins	Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads up the smaller hill, keeping the Flint and Steel car park to the right.
7.44	Int. Basin Trk and West Head Rd -33.5901,151.2822 (GR Broken Bay, 406820)	13 -3	360 m 7 mins	Veer left: From the car park, this walk follows the management trail around the green gate, keeping West Head Rd on the right.
7.81	Int. Basin Trk and Aboriginal Engraving Trk Entry -33.5925,151.2823 (GR Broken Bay, 406817)	3 -1	110 m 2 mins	Alternate Route Int. Basin Trk and Aboriginal Engraving Trk Entry. Turn right: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Aboriginal Engravings' sign into the heath and away from the management trail.
7.81	Int. Basin Trk and Aboriginal Engraving Trk Entry -33.5925,151.2823 (GR Broken Bay, 406817)	14 -94	1.8 km 33 mins	Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads south up the hill (keeping the engravings on the right) to the next signposted intersection with the 'Aboriginal Engravings' track on the right.
9.59	Mackerel Trk Clearing -33.5922,151.2991 (GR Broken Bay, 422818)	12 -94	900 m 20 mins	Veer right: From the intersection, this walk follows the ridge down towards the sea.

Summary navigation sheet for the Mackerel Beach, West Head Loop



km	From	Up/Dwn	Length	Initial directions (Use full tracknotes and maps for more detail)
10.49	Mackerel Beach Wharf -33.5904,151.3008 (GR Broken Bay, 423820)	0 -2	1.9 km 28 mins	Turn right: From Mackerel Beach wharf, this walk uses the ferry to cross Pittwater to the Palm Beach wharf.