

FAUNA

The eastern grey kangaroos, red-necked wallabies and swamp wallabies are the common macropods of the area, using the refuge provided by the National Park. Their tracks are often seen on the beaches or they can be disturbed napping under bushes throughout the park.

Brush-tailed and ring-tailed possums inhabit the thick scrub of the National Park. Echidnas poke their noses into sandy places for ants and long-nosed bandicoots lie snug in their hollows under casuarina debris. Keen eyes may spot marsupial mice (*Antechinus*) or native bush rats that provide the staple diet for local goannas and snakes. You may also see the occasional pest animal such as a fox or rabbit.

Threatened species that have been detected in the area include the greater broad-nosed bat, the grey-headed flying fox, both glossy black and gang gang cockatoos, the powerful owl and the masked owl.

You may spot some threatened shorebirds that use the local area. Resident pairs of red-billed pied oystercatchers can be seen all year round combing the beaches and lagoon shores for shellfish. In the warmer months you may be very lucky to see the vulnerable sanderling or endangered sooty oystercatchers, or perhaps hooded and red-capped plovers. Along estuaries are the more common wading and fishing birds, elegant egrets, high-stepping white faced herons and 'wait and watch' cormorants.



THE NATURAL SETTING

While reflecting the soil types of their individual habitats, present vegetation communities are almost all regrowth which have lost much of the detail and biodiversity of their original character. Over time, if left undisturbed, these areas should revert to forest.

Above the cliffs at the Congo end of the track, only the area immediately behind the cliffs was cleared for pasture, and this has gradually reverted to heathland. The mature bangalay, or coastal mahogany, forest further inland along the track was never cleared because the sandstone soils were too infertile for farming.

The landscape you pass through on the walking track has formed from the interaction of geology, the resulting soils and vegetation, and the history of land use. There are quite noticeable changes from stunted black ash and sparse ground cover with swathes of low sword grass on the plateau, into slopes and depressions carrying species of eucalypt such as woollybutt, forest red gum and bangalay with its generous spread of canopy. Parts of the cliff edges have flora of coastal heath, bright guinea flowers and purple native iris.

An important community is the wetland/lagoon system which collects water from its land catchment and occasionally the sea. Known as ICOLLS (Intermittently Closing and Opening Lake and Lagoon Systems), there are four in the area - Kelly's Lake, Grey Rocks Creek, Mullimburra Lagoon and Meringo Lagoon. After heavy rain or high seas they can open and flush out fresh water as well as fish, crustaceans and worms. Within a range of 'normal' conditions, if closed for some time, they can become smelly and full of algae. The brackish water supports plants adjusted to variable salt and water levels. The coastal lagoons are enclosed by casuarinas concentrations with sedges and salt-marsh plants.



BACKGROUND

Aborigines have occupied the Bingi-Congo area since well before the sea reached its present level about 6,000 years ago. Archaeological sites mostly date from the last few thousand years. These include campsites where artefacts were manufactured and used. The area is rich in stone flakes, stone quarry sites and shell middens where the remains of meals of fish and shellfish have accumulated over thousands of years.

European farmers first settled the area in the late 1840s. By the 1880s the original rich forest vegetation on the granite and basalt headlands between Bingi and Meringo were cleared for dairy farming, cattle raising and crops. Timber such as woollybutt and blackbutt was shipped from Moruya and ironbark was milled for railway sleepers.

Coastal reserves have been created over the last thirty years and these and other lands were absorbed into the existing Eurobodalla National Park in 1995. Shortly before and since the establishment of Eurobodalla NP, grass plantings by landcare groups and park managers have re-stabilised the foredunes and controlled major infestations of the introduced weed 'bitou bush'.



GEOLOGY

Bingi and Grey Rocks Points have formed on granites, Mullimburra Point on metamorphosed shales and sandstones, and the headlands and cliffs between Meringo and Congo are formed from basalt. Between the headlands, beach and dune sands have accumulated since the sea reached its present level. These sands have trapped small perched coastal lagoons (or ICOLLS). The track crosses four of these.

At the back of the cliffs between Meringo Lake and Congo the basalt is covered with younger quartz-rich sandstone and gravels, some of which has been cemented to form silcrete. Most of the Aboriginal stone artefacts on the South Coast were made from silcrete and the Congo area was a major source of this stone.

ABORIGINAL HISTORY OF THE TRACK

The Bingi-Congo coastal walk follows part of the Dreaming Track utilised by Brinja-Yuin people prior to European development. The word Bingi means stomach in Dhurga - the Aboriginal language spoken south of Nowra to Narooma - and when repeated as in Bingi Bingi Point indicates abundance.

Dreaming Tracks traditionally linked every place visited by local Aboriginal people, then extended to connect every place utilised by neighbouring clans so that all Aboriginal people in Australia were connected by these unique highways.

Dreaming Tracks are sometimes referred to as song lines, as individuals had to know the songs to successfully navigate the area, particularly if they were visiting another's country. At times however, they fulfill an entirely different function, particularly in ceremony.

It is the belief of Aboriginal people that the Spirit Ancestors of the people created the Dreaming Tracks in the journey of Creation across the land and therefore have a deep spiritual significance for them.

Historic journals have recorded European settlers using these tracks as trade routes and encountering groups of Aboriginal people in camps, or in transit gathering food and other materials.

The Bingi Dreaming track brings you close to shell middens, stone quarries, knapping sites, camp sites and fresh water sources. There are also beacon sites for sending smoke signals and lookouts traditionally used to spot schools of fish and visitors (wanted or unwanted).

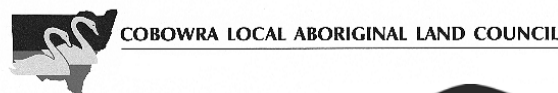
While enjoying this unique experience please respect the land and her dwellers for we are all one.

Information provided by
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Cobowra Local Aboriginal Land Council

LOCATION



The Bingi Dreaming Track is an Australian Government Envirofund funded project instigated by Bingi Landcare with the valuable help of Congo Landcare, Cobowra Local Aboriginal Land Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council and NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service.



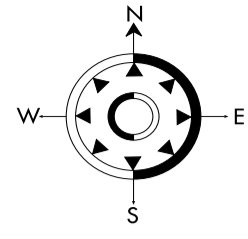
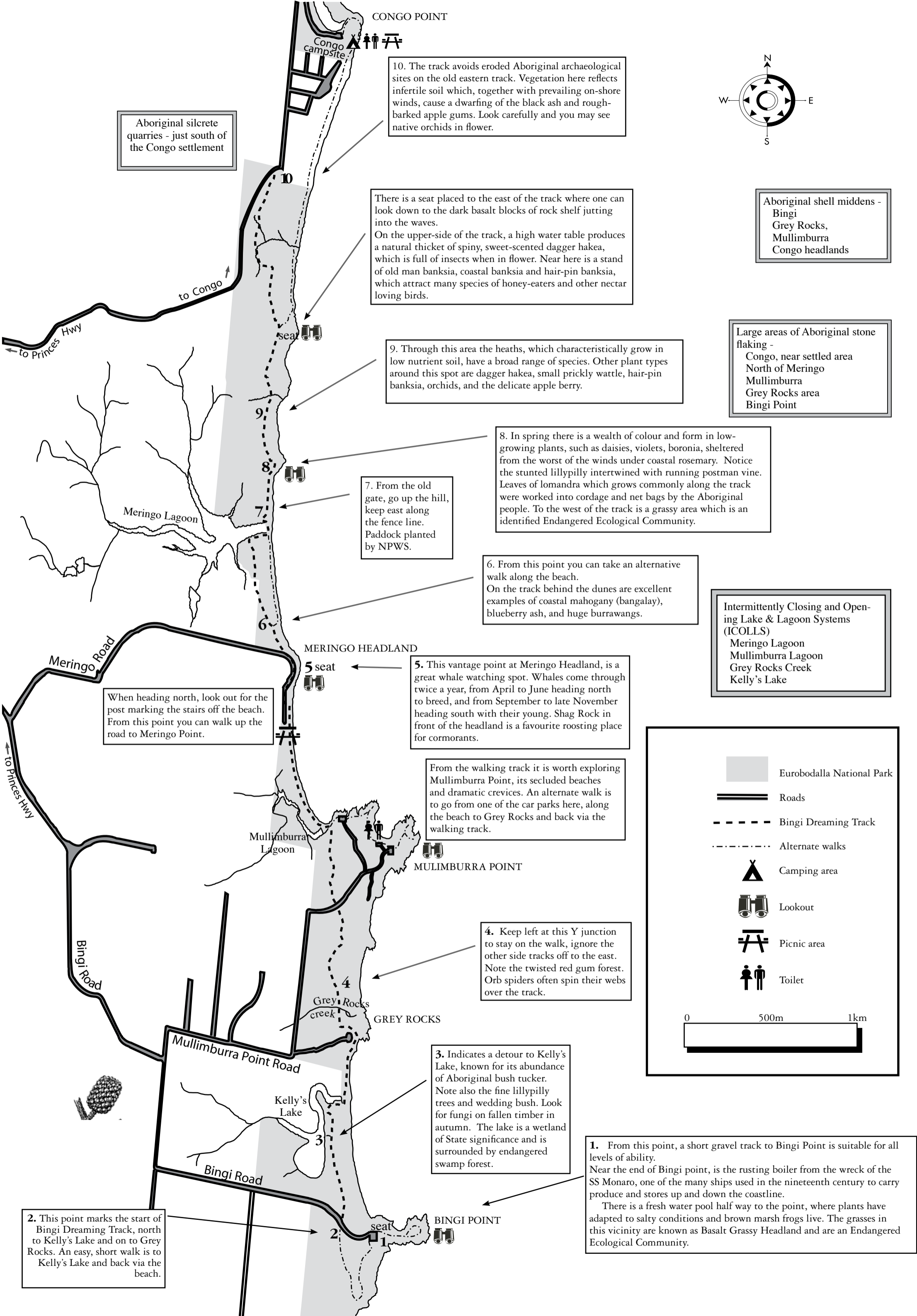
VISITORS' GUIDE

Eurobodalla National Park

BINGI DREAMING TRACK



This walking track is a Bingi Landcare project that marks largely existing tracks over 7.5 km of coastline between Bingi and Congo. The track winds its way through many different and spectacular landscapes providing an opportunity to appreciate the natural resources of the Bingi area.



Aboriginal silcrete quarries - just south of the Congo settlement

10. The track avoids eroded Aboriginal archaeological sites on the old eastern track. Vegetation here reflects infertile soil which, together with prevailing on-shore winds, cause a dwarfing of the black ash and rough-barked apple gums. Look carefully and you may see native orchids in flower.

There is a seat placed to the east of the track where one can look down to the dark basalt blocks of rock shelf jutting into the waves.
On the upper-side of the track, a high water table produces a natural thicket of spiny, sweet-scented dagger hakea, which is full of insects when in flower. Near here is a stand of old man banksia, coastal banksia and hair-pin banksia, which attract many species of honey-eaters and other nectar loving birds.

Aboriginal shell middens - Bingi Grey Rocks, Mullimburra Congo headlands

Large areas of Aboriginal stone flaking - Congo, near settled area North of Meringo Mullimburra Grey Rocks area Bingi Point

9. Through this area the heaths, which characteristically grow in low nutrient soil, have a broad range of species. Other plant types around this spot are dagger hakea, small prickly wattle, hair-pin banksia, orchids, and the delicate apple berry.

8. In spring there is a wealth of colour and form in low-growing plants, such as daisies, violets, boronia, sheltered from the worst of the winds under coastal rosemary. Notice the stunted lillypilly intertwined with running postman vine. Leaves of lomandra which grows commonly along the track were worked into cordage and net bags by the Aboriginal people. To the west of the track is a grassy area which is an identified Endangered Ecological Community.

7. From the old gate, go up the hill, keep east along the fence line. Paddock planted by NPWS.

6. From this point you can take an alternative walk along the beach. On the track behind the dunes are excellent examples of coastal mahogany (bangalay), blueberry ash, and huge burrawangs.

Intermittently Closing and Opening Lake & Lagoon Systems (ICOLLS)
Meringo Lagoon
Mullimburra Lagoon
Grey Rocks Creek
Kelly's Lake

5. This vantage point at Meringo Headland, is a great whale watching spot. Whales come through twice a year, from April to June heading north to breed, and from September to late November heading south with their young. Shag Rock in front of the headland is a favourite roosting place for cormorants.

When heading north, look out for the post marking the stairs off the beach. From this point you can walk up the road to Meringo Point.

From the walking track it is worth exploring Mullimburra Point, its secluded beaches and dramatic crevices. An alternate walk is to go from one of the car parks here, along the beach to Grey Rocks and back via the walking track.

4. Keep left at this Y junction to stay on the walk, ignore the other side tracks off to the east. Note the twisted red gum forest. Orb spiders often spin their webs over the track.

3. Indicates a detour to Kelly's Lake, known for its abundance of Aboriginal bush tucker. Note also the fine lillypilly trees and wedding bush. Look for fungi on fallen timber in autumn. The lake is a wetland of State significance and is surrounded by endangered swamp forest.

1. From this point, a short gravel track to Bingi Point is suitable for all levels of ability. Near the end of Bingi point, is the rusting boiler from the wreck of the SS Monaro, one of the many ships used in the nineteenth century to carry produce and stores up and down the coastline. There is a fresh water pool half way to the point, where plants have adapted to salty conditions and brown marsh frogs live. The grasses in this vicinity are known as Basalt Grassy Headland and are an Endangered Ecological Community.

2. This point marks the start of Bingi Dreaming Track, north to Kelly's Lake and on to Grey Rocks. An easy, short walk is to Kelly's Lake and back via the beach.

Legend:

- Eurobodalla National Park
- Roads
- Bingi Dreaming Track
- Alternate walks
- Camping area
- Lookout
- Picnic area
- Toilet

Scale: 0 500m 1km