

Hinchinbrook Is. Walking Track Info. Draft 5/12/91

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Mangrove forests form a major component in the island's geography and ecology. They are among the richest and most diverse in Australia.

The vine forests comprise a total of 28.5% of the vegetation of the island while open sclerophyll forests and woodlands occupy 26.4%. Other vegetation complexes include mountain rock pavements, coastal beach ridges and coastal plains, and saline littoral communities.

Most of the mountain ranges are very steep with a fair proportion (79 sq.km) rising above 300m in altitude.

The mountain massif is composed of granite of the Permian Age (xxxxxx years) while the lower ranges are silicic volcanics (xxxxx years). The remainder of the geology is Quaternary (xxxxx years) and consists of alluvium, sand dunes and screes.

Hinchinbrook lies in a high rainfall area (1500-2000mm per annum) and its mountain peaks catch passing clouds all year round.

The island has a system of walking tracks which provide excellent opportunities for bushwalkers and campers to experience and appreciate the natural environment.

These tracks are present at the following locations:

The Haven - 1 km - a short, relaxing? loop walk.

Macushla - 8km - linking to Cape Richards, North and South Shepherd Bay.

The East Coast - 32km - an extended bushwalk between George Point and Ramsay Bay.

Camping Permits

In order to help minimize the impact of recreational activities visitor numbers are limited. All intending campers/walkers are required to purchase a camping permit from a National Parks office before travelling to the island. Transport is available through commercial water taxis out of Cardwell and Lucinda. For permits and further information please contact:

QNPWS
Cardwell Information Centre
PO Box 74
Cardwell Qld 4816
Ph 070 66 8601

or

QNPWS
Canegrowers Building
Lannercost Street
PO Box 1293
Ingham Qld 4850

The Thorsborne Track

A minimum of 3 nights/4 days is required to traverse the 32km of track between Ramsay Bay and George Point. The through walk can be achieved from either end, offering minimal impact bushwalking along a well marked track and minimal disturbance camping at specific locations.

It is recommended that this track be walked as a 4-5 day through walk between George Point and Ramsay Bay or visa versa

Return walks from George Point or Ramsay Bay are also available dependant on your available time.

A full day should be allowed to cover the following parts of the walk:

Ramsay Bay to Little Ramsay Bay; Little Ramsay Bay to Zoe Bay; Zoe Bay to Mulligan Bay.

While it is possible for faster groups to cover long distances, this does not allow time for observing nature, swimming and enjoying the walk. X

Track Advice

Before setting out on this walk it is necessary to consider the following points:

- Be organized and well equipped – sturdy reliable footwear is vital.
- A fuel stove, mosquito net, tent or fly, water bottles, and hat are extremely important.
- Water is usually available in several creeks along the track, but becomes scarce in the dry season between July and October.
- If creeks are dry or salty at recommended watering points, fresh water can often be found upstream.
- At least 2 litres of water should be carried by each walker.
- Day temperatures and humidity may be high at any time of the year (26-34°). Winter nights (May-Sept) are cool enough for a sleeping bag.
- Heavy rain can fall at any time of year.
- Avoid insect bites (sandflies, mosquitos and march flies) by using a repellent.
- Creek beds and rock surfaces become **very slippery** when wet. They should be avoided where possible.

Special mention is made for the following:

- **Crossing of Diamantina Creek requires extreme care** when the creek is swollen from heavy rain.
- **Box jellyfish** capable of causing fatalities may be present in the sea between November and May. Swimming in the sea is not advisable during these months.
- **Estuarine crocodiles** often inhabit the mangrove estuaries and tidal lagoons of the island.

Mountain Areas

In order to protect the outstanding beauty and unspoilt nature of the mountain regions of Hinchinbrook Island and in the interests of safety, walking in these areas is restricted. A **special permit is required** before any group sets out into the mountains. This is relevant for Mt Bowen and Mt Diamantina, and Mt Straloch. X
Your observance of the guidelines is crucial to retain Hinchinbrook Island's exceptional ecological values.

mt

Straloch

MINIMAL IMPACT BUSHWALKING

The rise in popularity of outdoor recreation has led to a vast increase in the number of bushwalkers visiting Hinchinbrook Island. With this increase in use comes the potential of damage to the natural environment. Bushfires caused from illegal campfires, trampling and cutting of vegetation, outbreaks of gastroenteritis and rapid deterioration of walking tracks **are potential dangers**.

Fortunately, along with the increased popularity, a new bushwalking ethic has evolved. The **"Minimal Impact Bushwalking"** philosophy is now being widely adopted by walkers. Without it we run the very real danger of "loving out wild areas to death"

BEFORE YOU GO

To walk and camp on the island with the least impact you need the right equipment. As well as your usual bushwalking gear, a few other items are necessary.

- A fuel stove and fuel.
- A good quality tent that keeps biting insects out.
- A hand trowel.

Planning ahead is also vital. Be constantly aware of the effect your presence is likely to have on the environment.

- On the Thorseborne Track Maximum group size is six (6). Large parties are advised to use the Macushla or Haven areas.
- Plan your walking times so that you camp at designated campsites along the track, rather than creating a new site for your own need.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The Thorseborne Track traverses some rugged terrain. The QNPWS is maintaining and realigning the track as funds allow. You can help limit any detrimental impact by observing the following guidelines:

- stay on the established track
- DO NOT cut corners on steep or winding sections of the track
- DO NOT create new tracks. These increase erosion and visual scarring as well as causing confusion to other walkers as to which is the right track.

FUEL STOVE ONLY AREAS

Hinchinbrook and other island National Parks are now zoned as Fuel Stove Only Areas to reduce the risk of wildfires and lessen environmental degradation at campsites. Open camp fires are NOT allowed. This applies to the beaches also where driftwood provides shelter and nesting for certain seashore birds.

NO TRACE CAMPING

With modern camping equipment you can leave a campsite looking as if you had never been there.

- Camp at designated sites only
- Spend only the recommended number of nights at these camp sites

CARRY OUT WHAT YOU CARRY IN

Do NOT litter the bush in any way. Carry a strong plastic bag for all rubbish. The old rule of "Burn, Bash and Bury" no longer applies.

- If eating coconuts, clean up the husks from around the site.

WASHING

- Wash away from creeks and swimming holes. Detergents, tooth paste and soap (even biodegradable types) harm fish and other water life. Wash at least 50 metres away from creeks and scatter the wash-water so that it will filter through the soil before returning to the stream. Use gritty sand and a scourer instead of soap to clean dishes. Avoid putting food scraps into creeks and swimming holes.

TOILETTING AND HYGIENE

A trowel **MUST** be used to bury toilet waste and paper at least six (6) inches under the soil. The deeper the better as scrub fowls and turkeys tend to resurface it.

When toileting, be as far as possible (at least 70 metres) away from the campsite, the track or any creek or drainage line.

Failure to do this leads to unsightliness, smells and potentially dangerous hygiene problems.

Use the toilets provided at Nina Bay and Zoe Bay.

another heading?
The Mosaic-tailed tree rat (*Melomys spp.*) and the White-tailed rat (*Uromys caudimaculatus*) are present at most camp sites. To avoid damage to packs, tents and to food supplies, hang food/packs up using strong string or cord. Keep cooking utensils and food off the ground surface and cover at night.

COURTESY

Respect the presence of others in all you activities. In the bush the sounds of the natural inhabitants should predominate.

Be self-reliant and fully self-sufficient. **DO NOT** construct shelters or utensils from the bush.

CONSERVATION

To preserve the island's exceptional ecological values, rocks, vegetation, and fauna should be left undisturbed.

You are the beneficiary and the trustee of what Hinchinbrook Island has to offer.

Please take note of these guidelines for its preservation for future generations.

'Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints'