

## Walking the Lake

### Wangi Waddle

Correct as at 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2019

#### Overview and Track Information

This is an easy to moderate walk in two sections. The first section is a 2.5km loop that is on well-defined fire trails and walking tracks. The surface is generally rough but stable, and there are earthen steps with timber risers on all the steep sections. It provides good views to Pulbah Island.

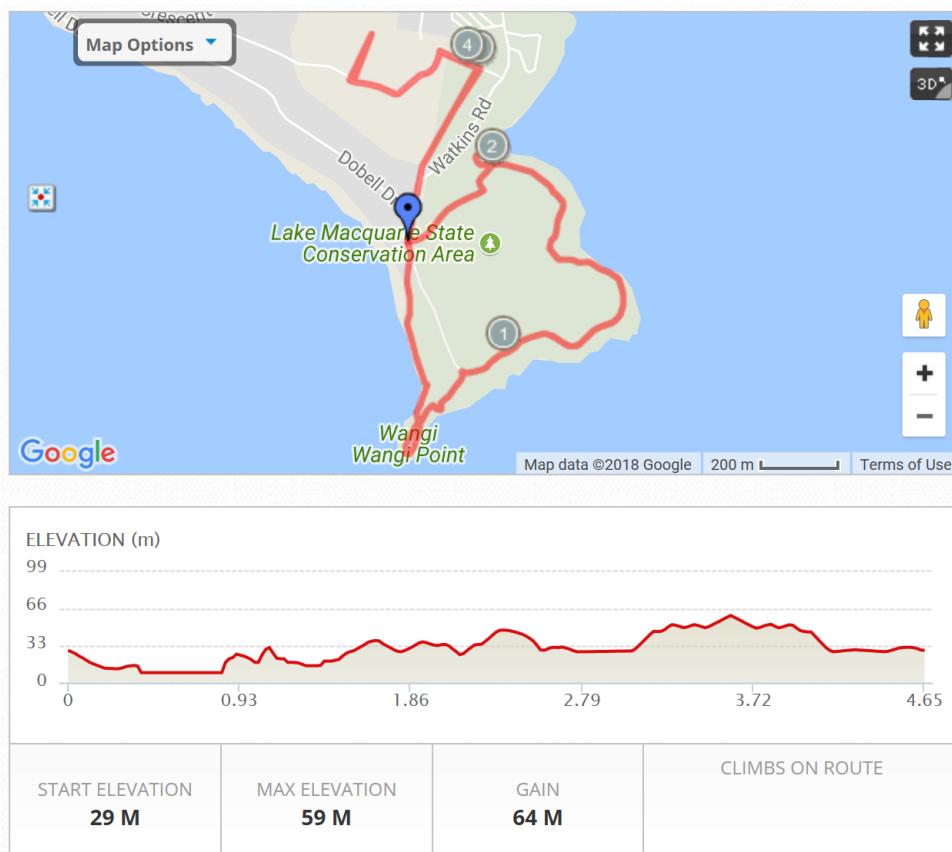
The second section is a 2km there-and-back walk that climbs to the top of the ridge and the WWII gun emplacements. It has a steep climb up steps to the ridge top and a short steep section of fire trail. There is a lookout with views over Catalina Bay.

#### Meeting Point & Getting There

The meeting point is parking area just uphill from the intersection of Reserve Road and end of Dobell Drive, Wangi Wangi.

#### Map and Elevation Profile

Both sections of the walk begin and end at the parking area, marked by the blue pointer on the map.



#### Background & Source

The first section of the walk follows the well-established Circuit track in the Wangi Wangi Point Reserve, maintained by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The second section follows a foot trail created as part of the Wangi Ridge Reserve.

## Track Notes

From the stone memorial near the car park at the start point, walk past the picnic table and information sign to the foot track. Follow the foot track uphill.

Soon you come to an intersection with the Wangi SW Fire Trail. Turn left onto the fire trail and continue roughly parallel to the lake shore. After about 500m the fire trail starts to swing left. On your right there is a log lying on the ground at the start of a gravel foot trail going down a steep hill toward the lake. Take the foot trail.

Follow the gravel foot trail to the edge of the lake, then turn left onto the rocks along the foreshore. Follow the foreshore until you come to a set of wooden stairs on your left. Climb the stairs, then turn right onto the dirt foot trail.

Follow the trail for about 100m to the tip of Wangi Wangi Point. There is a seat here and a short track to the rocks at the tip of the point with good views up the lake. In front of you is Pulbah Island, the largest island in Lake Macquarie. It measures approximately 1.6 kilometres in length, around 70 hectares in area and is formed of resistant sandstone and conglomerate rock with large boulders and caves along the foreshore. It was known to the Aboriginal people as Boroyirong, and was home to Wau-wai, a monster fish which terrorised them. It was also referred to as Bulba, which is an Awabakal word meaning island. This name was corrupted by white inhabitants, and Pulba was first documented by Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell on his map of NSW published in 1834. Over the years, the 'h' was added to the spelling, and Pulbah is the name which has come into popular usage.

Return to the foot trail, turn right and continue to follow it around Wangi Wangi Point until it rejoins the main trail. Follow the main trail to the right. Very soon you will come to an intersection with another trail on the right which leads to another set of wooden steps. Go down the steps to the lake shore where there are some lovely views across Eraring Bay to Fishing Station Point and beyond it to the tip of Coal Point.

Go back up the steps and immediately turn right onto the foot track. Follow it back up the hill to the fire trail.

You will see a sign in front of you indicating the Wangi Point Circuit walking track. Turn right onto the fire trail. The track almost immediately forks. Take the left hand fork that heads gently uphill.

Continue along the track as it swings north then west above the shoreline. Stay on the main foot track – ignore the numerous small side tracks on the right that have been made by fishermen. Climb the wooden-framed steps to the top. Soon the track goes down a fairly steep descent to the lake shore. Continue to follow the track along the lake shore past the Lake Macquarie State Recreation Area sign and around the small bay. The track climbs a low ridge. At the top of the ridge another well-defined track joins from the left. Very soon after that you will come to a junction with another well-defined track on your right. This is the two kilometre mark (there is no signpost).

Turn right and follow the track downhill towards a sheltered cove. At the lowest point of this track there is a fork; take the left hand fork and then continue to follow the track as it swings uphill and back towards the main trail. When it meets the main trail again, turn right and climb the short steep hill back to the picnic ground, passing the junction with the Wangi Ridge walking track on the way. This completes the easy 2.5km circuit.

To walk the second section, walk down to Reserve Road. Cross the Reserve Road and into the lay by. Walk to the end of the lay by, past the Wangi Ridge Reserve sign and follow the foot track into the reserve.

The foot track soon becomes a set of steps with wooden risers as it climbs onto the ridge and meets a gravel fire trail. The fire trail is the Wangi W Trail, and the intersection is the 3km mark. Turn left onto the fire trail and continue to climb to the top of the ridge.

On the top of the hill are the remains of the concrete bunkers of a secret WWII anti-aircraft gun emplacement put in place to protect the RAAF Rathmines Catalina base. The Rathmines air base played a pivotal role in the defence of Australia in World War II and was considered a target. An early warning radar station at Catherine Hill Bay would alert the guns if a raid was coming. The site includes a concrete bunker, once a command base, four gun emplacements and an ammunition dump.

Follow the fire trail through the site and just over the crest of the hill is a track to the right signposted "Lookout". Walk down hill to the wooden viewing platform on the right of the path with good views northwest to Elizabeth, Pelican and Spectacle Islands at the mouth of the Swansea Channel. Retrace your route back to the car park.