



# Cockle Creek

## SOUTHWEST NATIONAL PARK

Cockle Creek is a place of tranquil coves and sandy beaches. Distant mountain peaks, sometimes capped with snow, make a spectacular backdrop to the calm waters of Recherche Bay. It is here that tannin-rich streams meet the ocean, ending their meandering journey through buttongrass plains. The sheltered coastline and forested hills of Cockle Creek are home to an abundance of wildlife. This scenic area is dotted with evidence of human history including Aboriginal sites, abandoned tramways, gravestones and ruins. The European settlement at its peak supported more than 2000 people.

Cockle Creek is the southern entry point to Southwest National Park, part of Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area.

### Access

Cockle Creek is 148 km south of Hobart (2 hours drive). It can be reached by travelling along the Huon Highway (A6) through Geeveston. Take the C635 past the Hastings Caves turn off, then follow the C636 rough gravel road through Lune River and Ida Bay to Cockle Creek. Southport is the most southerly place to purchase petrol.

### Things To Do

There are a variety of walks in this area, ranging from short nature walks to challenging treks in the southwest wilderness. This is a perfect place for birdwatching. Water activities such as fishing and boating are also very popular. At the national park entrance there is an information booth and site office (staffed intermittently during busy periods) to help make the most of your visit. You may also like to read the Fishers Point Walk factsheet.

### Camping Facilities

Basic facilities are provided. These include toilets, cleared campsites and tank water. The water is not treated so please boil before drinking. There are no camping fees but a park entry pass is required if you go past the bridge over Cockle Creek. There is no rubbish collection. Please take all rubbish away with you.



Cockle Creek Photo: Dennis Harding

You will need to bring your own firewood (only for use in the Nature Recreation Area) however, fuel or gas stoves are recommended. Chainsaws are not permitted in either area. Showers are not provided. Caravans can access the area, but the road is very rough and flat campsites are limited.

### Two Distinct Areas

#### Recherche Bay Nature Recreation Area

Here campsites are mostly large open areas that can accommodate 10 - 15 tents and caravans. A few smaller sites also exist closer to the national park. Generators are permitted as are dogs on leads.

#### Southwest National Park

This is the area south and east of Cockle Creek itself. All national park rules apply. Park Passes are available at Service Tasmania in Hobart and Huonville. During peak periods, the site office may be staffed intermittently. If the office is closed, please use the self registration facility outside the office to purchase parks passes. The Parks and Wildlife, Southern District Office in Huonville, will be able to assist you if Cockle Creek is not staffed, phone 03 6121 7031.

No dogs, generators, firearms etc. are permitted within the park and a park entry pass is required. Camp sites are mostly smaller and can accommodate one or two tents. However at Boltons Green there is room for approximately 10 tents in one area.

## Walks

Walk	Time	Difficulty
Bronze Whale Sculpture	10 mins return	Easy
Fishers Point	2 hours return	Moderate
South Cape Bay	4 hours return	Moderate

**Bronze Whale Sculpture:** Starts from the very end of the road, 800 m past Cockle Creek Bridge.

**Fishers Point Navigation Light and Pilot Station Ruins:** Starts from the bronze whale sculpture as above. A Fishers Point walk factsheet is available.

**South Cape Bay:** Starts from Cockle Creek Bridge. Follow the vehicle track along the southern bank of Cockle Creek. After 400 m you will reach the walking track. The track is well marked and constructed to South Cape Bay, where there are spectacular views and beaches. Please ensure that you have adequate food, water, weatherproof clothing and a first aid kit.

Longer walks also start from the Cockle Creek bridge. See South Coast Walks Map and Notes and the factsheet available on <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au>.



Bronze Whale Sculpture



South Cape Bay

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Where to register for a walk

Bushwalkers should register their trip intentions with a responsible friend or with the police. Please also register in the booth, located a short distance along the South Coast Track to South Cape Bay. The book is not checked unless someone is notified as overdue, so be sure to leave your walk schedule and contact details with friends or the police.

### Fishing

Sea Fisheries Regulations apply, for further information refer to <http://www.fishonline.tas.gov.au>

### Drinking Water

There is tank water provided at Boltons Green campsite.

### Shops and facilities

The closest shops are at Hastings and Southport 20 km to the north. Southport also has petrol, hotel/ caravan park, restaurant and accommodation. Dover, 35 km to the north, has two small supermarkets, post office, part time police station, hotel, caravan park and accommodation places.

### Messages to campers or bushwalkers

Messages can be left at the information booth notice board, but we cannot guarantee delivery.

### Weather

Tasmanian weather can change very suddenly. On average, rain falls on 212 days of the year, so it is necessary to carry waterproofs and warm clothing with you at all times. Also carry sun protection on any walks. Up to date weather forecasts are available from the Bureau of Meteorology on 1900 955 364, or visit the website at [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au). Boating weather forecasts for the southern region are available for the cost of a local call from Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) on 6233 9955. On days of total fire ban, Parks and Wildlife will erect warning signs.

### Is there Public Transport?

**Tasmanian Wilderness Experience** can transport walkers from Cockle Creek to Hobart (including Hobart Airport). Bookings are required.  
Phone 1300 882 293  
Email [info@twe.travel](mailto:info@twe.travel)  
[www.twe.travel](http://www.twe.travel)

**Dover Taxico** will take up to 7 backpackers with packs. Bookings are required.  
Phone 0429 982 006

**Huon Valley Taxi Service** will take up to 7 backpackers with packs. Bookings are required.  
Phone 0408 125 130

**Maxi Cabs** can transport up to 12 people from Cockle Creek to Hobart. Bookings are required. Phone 0429 168 905

**Tassielink Coaches** operate a bus service from Geeveston to Hobart. Phone 1300 300 520  
www.tassielink.com.au

## A brief history of the region

*Information courtesy of Far South Tasmania Inc. from the brochure 'A Traveller's Glimpse into the History of Recherche Bay in the Far South of Tasmania.'*

The original inhabitants of this area were the Aboriginal people. Their first encounter with Europeans was with the French, an amicable meeting which could be considered a 'cultural exchange'. The French expeditions were focused on the scientific study of native flora, fauna, geology and the waterways of Van Diemen's Land.

Later, for the Aboriginals, contact with British settlers was not as friendly. The Aboriginal people were removed from their country to Bruny Island.

Recherche Bay itself, sheltered from the wildest weather, provided some safe harbour for the influx of early settlers, sealers and convicts. Early industries based initially on coal-mining and whaling became established. Coal was sent to Hobart and the oil produced from whales helped the emerging colony with lighting, cooking and the manufacture of soaps and corsets. The bronze whale sculpture that presently sits at Adams Point pays homage to this history.

With such an intense boating industry, and with early access to this area only possible by sea, there was demand for ship-building and local timber-milling was established. One of the features of this somewhat sheltered coastline was that tall forest eucalypts grew close to the shore, making for convenient, though still dangerous, harvesting. Timber was not only required for the local collieries and boat building, but for housing and domestic needs. A number of mills were established around the bay over time, with one mill at Cockle Creek run by women during World War II. Tram tracks spread out into the bush to retrieve logs from the hinterland.

Fishing for food was a necessity in such an isolated area and also became a source of income, with Recherche Bay supplying Hobart and even London with oysters in the late 19th Century. Sharks too were harvested for their liver oil and then became fertilizer for domestic and market gardens which provided fresh vegetables for Hobart.

With the overlap of these various livelihoods and industries, towns with schools, shops and post offices were gazetted and established. Generations of families have left a legacy of their endeavours, not only in the place names around the bay, but in their store of memories.

We can now drive with some ease to this region, set as it is near some of the most beautiful mountains and country in Tasmania. Much of the forest has regrown along the coastline – reclaiming houses, villages and structures lost to fire, decay or economic change. We may glimpse some exotic plant that speaks of a different time, or we may see some remnant wooden pier post or a stone footing that stirs our imagination to wonder.

The bay is mostly a quiet place now, with its holiday shacks, its beaches and the lap of waves...and the lap of waves upon a midden...the earliest record of human history here.

### Further information

'Recherche Bay - a short history' by Bruce Poulson  
ISBN 0975797506

# Cockle Creek Camping Areas

