

# Solitary Islands Marine Park

## Arrawarra Headland



## Meeting Place of Many Stories

Arrawarra Headland, near Coffs Harbour, is very important to the Garby Elders, their families and descendants of the Gumbaynggirr Nation. The word “Arrawarra” means meeting place and has long been a special place where Garby Elders and people meet, hold ceremonies, gather fresh seafood and collect natural medicine. Parts of the headland are traditionally only visited by men and is a rain making site.

Ancient stone fish traps are located on Arrawarra Headland and have been used for thousands of years for trapping fish. The traps are baited using fish heads, scraps of shell fish or cunjevoi (sea squirts).



*Aerial photo of Arrawarra Headland and stone fish traps*

Fish caught include, bream, drummer, mullet, whiting and flathead. Shellfish collected from the rocky shore included Turban shells or “Googoombull”, as well as oysters and octopus.

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The headland is within a Special Purpose Zone in the Solitary Islands Marine Park and protects this sensitive site. Only traditional fishing activities by Elders and research are allowed.

Traditional nets are woven from local plants such as the Cottonwood Hibiscus, which is located next to the headland. The milky mangrove is also located near the fish traps and the leaves were crushed and used to stun fish in the traps.



*Nets*

To help bring the fish into the fish traps the Elders called upon the dolphins. A midden is located near the headland, where old shells and fish bones are buried in sand. These were eaten by Aboriginal people up to 2000 years ago.



*Elders inspecting the fish traps*

When visiting the Headland it is important to respect local traditions and ensure you:

- Stay on the rocky shore close to the beach to avoid entering the men's rain making site;
- Use only quiet voices;
- Avoid spitting;
- Leave all plant and animals on the rocky shore;
- Look at the middens but don't touch, and
- Leave all rocks where they are and do not throw rocks



Thanks to Garby Elders and Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation for sharing their knowledge of traditional activities at Arrawarra Headland.