



SMITHS LAKE IS NATURALLY STUNNING AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE

While it is there for us all to enjoy, our behaviours and that of the many holiday-makers who visit us can directly impact the health of the lake and the habitat it provides.

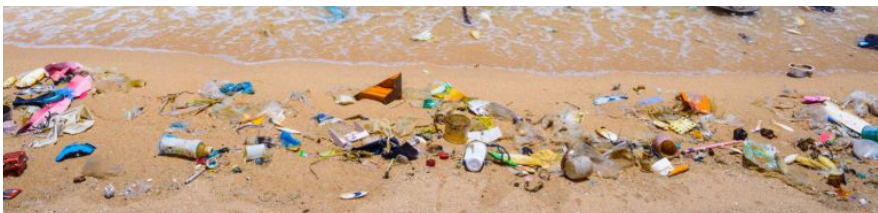
Here are some things you can do to help protect the lake, its foreshore, and the flora and fauna that thrive in and around the lake.

Litter and marine debris

When it's not disposed of responsibly, rubbish from our everyday lives can wash into our creeks, rivers and oceans creating unhealthy waterways. Whether it's at home, or when you're out and about, ensure you dispose of all waste correctly, including food scraps which can attract wildlife.

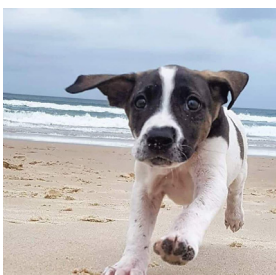
To help protect our environment make sure you:

- place all waste in the appropriate bin
- pick up after your pets so their waste doesn't end up in our waterways



Dogs in public spaces

We all love our pets and they are a big part of our family holidays, however it is important to ensure they are enjoying Smiths Lake appropriately.



Leash free zones allow dogs to exercise off the lead so they can 'burn off' excess energy in a safe environment without being out of control.

For more information on leash free zones and times visit www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/dogs

ABOUT SMITHS LAKE

Smiths Lake is part of the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park and its clear water and peaceful surrounds make it a popular holiday destination.

The lake alternates between being open and closed to the ocean, and is one of about 70 Intermittently Closed and Open Lakes and Lagoons (ICOLLs) along the NSW coast.

ICOLLs are dynamic coastal environments that naturally open and close to the ocean in a constant but irregular cycle.

These changes occur in response to water levels in the lake as well as sand movement from waves, tides and wind.

DID YOU KNOW?



Artificial light can affect birds and other wildlife.

To protect our animals keep outdoor lights to a minimum and remember to turn them off when you go to bed.



Feeding wild birds can make them sick. Let them forage for themselves and enjoy them in their native setting.

4WDs at Smiths Lake

The beaches at Smiths Lake are stunning natural areas which we enjoy for fishing, swimming, surfing and four wheel driving. These beaches are also dynamic and environmentally sensitive, supporting a range of threatened species, ecosystems and culturally significant sites, so it is important to enjoy them responsibly.

Driving on the lake bed and dunes causes damage to protected marine vegetation, crustaceans and disturbs wading birds and is not permitted under any circumstances. Hefty fines are enforced for taking 4WDs into prohibited areas.

To help protect Smiths Lake when four wheel driving:



Ensure you have all appropriate permits to undertake 4WD activities



Drive only in the designated 4WD areas



Do not drive onto the lake bed or dunes

Find out more about driving on MidCoast beaches and where to obtain a permit at www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/beachdriving



Responsible pet ownership

It is estimated that over 60% of Australian households have one or more pets.

Without their owners knowing, domestic pets can catch and kill native animals or prevent them from entering a residential backyard.

Feral and domestic cats are the biggest threat to native animals in the urban environment. Cats are opportunistic predators and will climb trees to prey on native wildlife. It's very important that domestic cats are kept indoors, or confined to cat enclosures.



Domestic and wild animals can live side by side:



Desex domestic cats



Build cat runs or modular pet parks for cats



Keep dogs and cats in their yard



Don't leave out extra food for pets because you might attract foxes or Indian myna birds

This project was developed with the Wallis and Smiths Lake Coast & Estuary Committee and Smiths Lake residents.

For more information about sharing the shore responsibly, visit: www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/sharetheshore