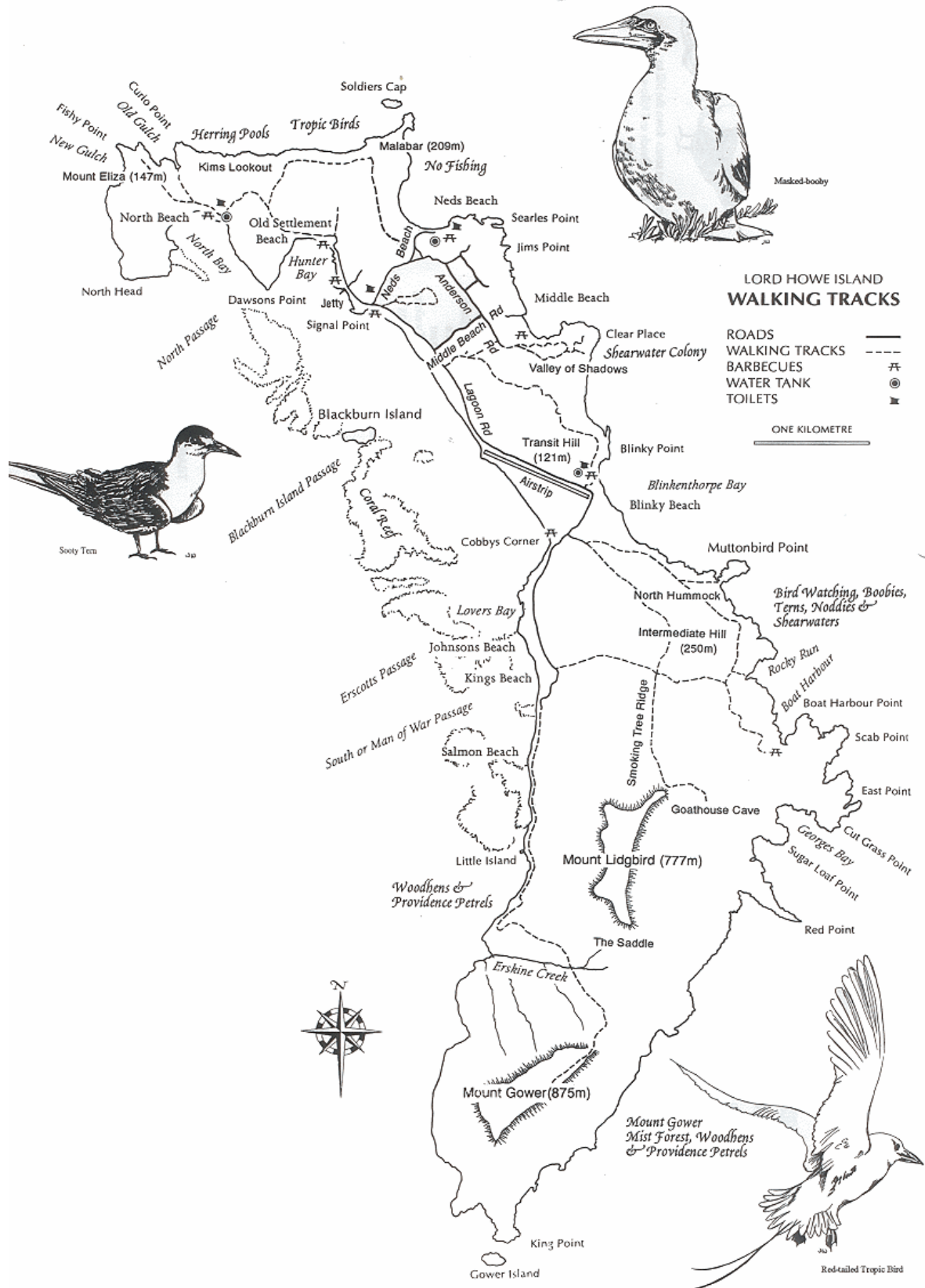


PERMANENT PARK PRESERVE AND WALKING TRACKS



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The significance of the Lord Howe Island Region has been recognised internationally by its inclusion on the World Heritage List in 1982. To protect the environment on the Island a Permanent Park Preserve was declared in 1981, administered by the Lord Howe Island Board with essentially the same management guidelines as a National Park.

The Permanent Park Preserve occupies nearly two-thirds of Lord Howe Island. The establishment of the Preserve is the end result of over one hundred years of scientific interest in geology, plants and animals of the Island and concern for their conservation. To provide access to the many significant features of the Preserve a network of walking tracks has been developed. These walking tracks enable visitors to experience the spectacular scenery and unique environments of the Island.

Each walk is given a rating of 1 to 10 in degree of difficulty. The tracks are well marked and have signs at the beginning pointing the way and giving distances, which may not seem great but most are steep and are interspersed with tree roots and rocks so may take longer than you think.

NORTHERN SECTION

TRANSIT HILL

Class 3, 2 hours return, 2km

This easy walk starts at the Administration Centre and goes up Bowker Avenue through dry rainforest with Greybark, Palms, Blackbutt, Maulwood and Sallywood trees. After following the fenceline above Pinetrees Paddock it passes into forest again to the top where a viewing platform allows 360 degree views around. From here you can return the same way or go south down the hill to emerge at Blinky Beach and follow the road back along the airstrip.

Clear Place

Class 2, 1-2 hours return

An easy, fairly level walk, starts at the top of Middle Beach Road, and follows Anderson Road south, and through a paddock to the edge of the forest. Here a disused road leads through dense palm forest to a lookout known as the Clear Place. A short diversion near Clear Place leads in and out to the Valley of the Shadows. Return the same way, but branch right half way along, to go to Middle Beach. If the tide is low you can walk along the beach to steps leading up the northern end to the start; otherwise climb up from the southern end to join the paddock track.

Stevens Reserve

Class 1

A short flat walk starting at Lagoon Road near the Power house. The track follows a path that winds through tall rainforest of palms, Blackbutt, Maulwood, Banyan, Greybark and Sallywood trees. This walk has a number of interpretive signs to give information about the flora and fauna of the Island.

Max Nicholls track to North Bay

Class 3, 4 hours return, km4

Commencing near Old Settlement Beach. The track goes through a paddock and winds up to Dawson's Ridge, through Blackbutt/Greybark rainforest that dominates the Northern Hills. The track descends the western slope through the rainforest, under tall Banyan trees and sheltered gullies of Thatch Palms, and continues on to the North Beach picnic area with BBQs, tables, water tanks and toilets.

SOUTHERN SECTION

Coastal track to Rocky Run and Boat Harbour

Class 3

Commence at the base of Intermediate Hill near the Air terminal. the track follows the cast coast, passing through lowland forest of Curly Palms, Blackbutts, Greybarks and Hopwoods.

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Halfway along, a side track goes to Muttonbird Point where a large breeding colony of Masked Boobies can be viewed from a special viewing platform. Sooty Terns, Common Noddies and Wedgetailed Shearwaters also nest on the Point in summer. The track continues on to Rocky Run creek where you can follow the track down the right hand side of the creek to the sea (15 minutes); or continue on to Boat Harbour.

Boat Harbour consists of a beach of rounded volcanic boulders and worn coral and is well protected from southerly winds and swells. In each corner of the beach, drinking water is found by following small stream that lead up into shallow pools. A lunch spot is located at the southern corner. You can return the same way, or it is best to do a round trip going back through beautiful wet rainforest, over Smoking Tree Ridge to come out at lagoon Road at the foot of Mt Lidgbird.

Goat House

Class 4, 4 hours return, 4km

Access is from Lagoon Road at the base of Mt Lidgbird, climbing through wet rainforest to Smoking Tree Ridge and following the signs south up the slope of Mt Lidgbird. As you go higher the track becomes steeper and some ropes have been installed for your convenience and safety. Moist conditions here allow for a rich understorey of ferns. The climb gets steeper until you reach the cliffs at 400 metres in altitude. Follow the track to the left to find the Goat House cave - a large overhang in the volcanic cliffs. There are spectacular views of the settlement, and by walking around the ledge to the south, Bail's Pyramid can be seen.

Intermediate Hill

Class 2, 45 minutes return, 1km

Another route to both Goat House and Boat Harbour, this track begins on Lagoon Road near the Air terminal and climbs to the summit through dry rainforest dominated by Blackbutts, Greybarks and Sallywoods. It continues down the south side to link up with other tracks on the Smoking Tree Ridge.

Little Island

Class 1, 40 minutes return, 3km

A short walk along a disused road, this is a rewarding walk for anyone. The track passes in and out of the palm forest, and at the end, the vegetation forms a tunnel to walk under; keep an eye out here for Woodhens and Emerald Ground Doves. At Little Island you have spectacular views up at the cliffs of Mt Lidgbird and out to sea. From March to September large numbers of Providence Petrels wheel around the cliffs and over the water. At low tide there is a large rock platform to explore, with corals, clams, urchins and other sea creatures to observe.

Mount Gower

Class 5, 8 hours return, 14 km (only with a licensed guide)

This is the hardest walk on Lord Howe Island, going to 875 metres above sea level. The walk is strenuous and the track unmarked so the Island Board require that walkers only go with a licensed guide. This is in your best interest to avoid mishap and also learn about the flora and fauna from your guide. Some ropes have been fixed to the rock to assist in awkward places.

Along the track the scenery is constantly changing and the vegetation also changes as you go higher, with most of the plants in the mountains being endemic. On top there is a unique moss forest with ferns and mosses covering every available rock and tree. It is usual to come across Woodhens on and near the summit. From the top there is a spectacular view of Mt Lidgbird and the Island below. From March to September, nesting Providence Petrels are an added attraction.