

## COMERONG ISLAND,

1 walk

[regional Satellite map](#)

Comerong Island contains a large Nature Reserve east of Nowra formed by the Shoalhaven estuary, and noted for its importance to migratory shorebirds. Shoalhaven Heads was settled in 1822, by Alexander Berry.

**Use 1:25,000 topographic maps Nowra 9028-3-S and Berry 9028-3-N**

The sandflats between the township of Shoalhaven Heads and Comerong Island have formed since 1822, when a small canal was dug between the Shoalhaven and Crookhaven Rivers. Since that time Berry's Canal has gradually become the main tidal exchange for the Shoalhaven River. The former entrance to the Shoalhaven is now only periodically open to the sea after flood events. The area is rich in birdlife and the single walk described below can be undertaken in hole or parts. A good day and a half can be spent exploring this one area. If you have a boat, many more tidal inlets are available for exploration on the southern side of the island, while exploration of the lower reaches of the Shoalhaven and Crookhaven Rivers can also be rewarding.

- 1. Comerong Island Nature Reserve**, 7 or 10km return, easy grade.
  - i. If the Shoalhaven River is closed by a sand bar (often), park at Shoalhaven Heads and walk south across the extensive sandflats to the parking bay on the island.
  - ii. If the Shoalhaven River is open, access the island via a vehicular ferry from the Numbaa - Comerong Island Rd., east of Nowra.

Walk south along the vehicular track that traverses the length of the island, passing through dune woodland, tall forest and littoral rainforest. Approximately 1km south of the car park is an old track to the west. Follow this out into mangrove forest of Comerong Bay and if the tide is low, explore the immediate area. Numerous ancient specimens of the grey mangrove *Avicenia marina* can be found here. Back on the main track follow it south until you reach a picnic area on the Crookhaven River and walk out the breakwall on the north side of the river. Return to your car by walking the length of Comerong Beach,

or return along the track. Alternatively, there is a track half way along that also gives access to the beach. Birdlife is rich, the Shoalhaven estuary is home to the fifth largest congregation of migratory shorebirds in NSW during summer and species that may be observed include Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Red and Great Knots, Curlew, Sharp-tailed, Marsh and Pectoral Sandpipers, Red-necked Stint, Eastern Curlew, Whimbrel, Common Greenshank, Greater and Lesser Sandplovers, Double-banded and Red-capped Plovers, Pied Oystercatcher and Sanderling. Along the forest walk Scarlet Honeyeaters, Spangled Drongo, Topknot Pigeon, Emerald and Bar-shouldered Dove, Golden Whistler, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Lorikeet, Variegated Fairy-wren, Eastern Whipbird may be observed.