

Arrawarra (**Ya waarra** - literal translation 'here await') Headland is 30km north of Coffs Harbour, on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. The headland is situated in the north of Gumbaynggirr Country, and is recognised by the Garby Elders as an extremely important and significant site.



## Traditional Significance and Resource Use

Arrawarra Headland, including the stone fish traps, the rock platform and all landscape features on and around the headland, has been used for thousands of years for cultural activities such as gatherings, story telling and resource use. The headland is recognised by the Aboriginal people of the area as a significant men's-only rainmaking site, and is also a registered men's only site of significance under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.



### ◀ Photo

At low tide, Garby Elders harvest from the exposed rock platform which supports a high diversity of life.

Traditionally, the stone fish traps provided an effective means of capturing fresh fish (see Fact Sheet 3). Also, organisms living on the rock platform, including a range of shellfish, offered a plentiful source of food and medicines. The trapping of fish, as well as hand collection, spearing and line fishing

have been, and continue to be, an integral part of the Garby Elders' way of life (see Fact Sheets 4 and 6).

### Rainmaking

The headland is renowned as a place of cultural significance and an important men's rainmaking site.

**Guluun gaamnga**, or 'increase-the-rain ceremonies' are known to take place on the headland; however, all details are reserved for male members of the Garby Elders.

### Taboos on the Headland

Women and children of Aboriginal background are instructed not to venture onto the headland itself, or beyond the boundary of the stone fish traps and native cottonwood hibiscus trees on the northern side.

### Did you know?

All visitors to Arrawarra Headland, including the Garby Elders, are strictly advised by the Elders not to throw stones or tear the leaves of the pandanus trees on or near the headland as it is believed that such misbehaviour can cause unwanted rains to come.

## FACT SHEET 2 Arrawarra Headland



"When you go picking up things on the headland here you gotta remember to put 'em back where you found 'em. And don't go throwing things [...] This is a very special place to us; that's how the Elders say it has to be."

*Uncle Milton Duroux*



#### ◀ Photo

There are many old pandanus trees around Arrawarra Headland.

## Management and Conservation

The Arrawarra Headland rock platform is located within the Solitary Islands Marine Park. A Special Purpose Zone was declared by the NSW Marine Parks Authority in 2002 to provide for traditional use and specialised scientific research. This zone extends 200m offshore, and encompasses the rock platform, and the intertidal and subtidal region. Management of this zone is in accordance with a Conservation Plan.

## Scientific Use

The O'Farrell Marine Field Station is run by the University of New England (UNE), and has been in operation since the early 1960s. The station is used by undergraduate university groups, primary and secondary schools, as well as by staff and postgraduate students from both UNE and a range of other institutions.



#### ◀ Photo

Scientific monitoring is regularly undertaken on Arrawarra Headland.

Research conducted at the station provided the first regional descriptions of a range of marine habitats and their associated communities. The historical research work, combined with ongoing studies on a range of topics, continues to provide information that is invaluable in the management of marine habitats and biodiversity in the Solitary Islands Marine Park.

Photos: Adam Davey; David Elkins; Sasha Posthuma-Grbic; Steve Smith.

## Scientific Monitoring

Regular monitoring of resource use at Arrawarra Headland, in particular, traditional and modern harvesting of **gugumbal** (turban snails), is undertaken by traditional owners, in conjunction with students and staff from the University of New England and the National Marine Science Centre (see Fact Sheet 17).

#### ▼ Photo

Scientific monitoring helps to determine the effects of traditional harvesting.



  
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SHARING CULTURE

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