



Safer Surfing on Byron Bay's Beaches

A RIP is a current that flows straight out to sea. What Happens?



The waves break towards the beach, too much water is now at the beach and must escape. This forms the RIP. Surfers use these everyday to their advantage to carry them straight out to sea. When they do not wish to be in the RIP anymore, they paddle sideways, across the RIP.

When they reach the breaking waves, this is where they surf or where you can get back to the beach.

A RIP is identified by sand and sometimes seaweed getting swirled around in the discoloured water. The waves either side of the RIP are also of

better shape. RIPS are usually found where the beach meets the headlands, as well as along all open beaches. Always use your landmark to see which way you are travelling, out at sea.

Caught in a RIP?

Most importantly, stay calm, keep cool and always stay with your surfboard. Paddle sideways, across the RIP, parallel to the beach, **never against it.**

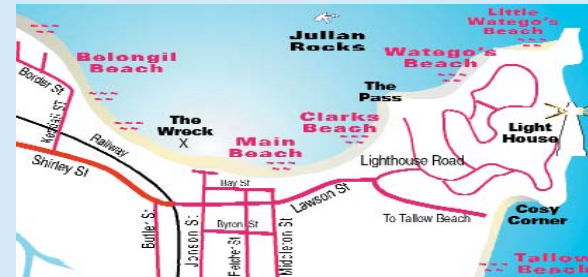
To attract attention:

Wave both arms above your head, crossing.

For assistance required:

One arm waved, above your head.

Use both of these signals, one after the other, so that others see that you are not waving to your mates.



The Wreck to Belongil Beach

This beach starts at the western side of the Main Beach car park and heads west away from the Lighthouse. Another great wave in Byron Bay that was formed when "The Wollongbar" was washed from the old Byron Bay jetty during the 1920s. The Wollongbar was then used as the major transport for all the tourists coming from Sydney to visit The Bay. You can still see the "rudder" and "the boilers" sticking out of the sand. Here both lefts and rights break on sandbanks that are always there because of the wreck. From here, all the way along Belongil Beach gets its good share of waves. It is great for both the experienced surfer and the beginner. The waves vary from fast-hollow dumping waves, to soft spilling waves, dependant on what the swell and sandbanks are doing. It will pick up most swells from the north to the south and likes a west to south west wind but also a south east is surfable. The sweep is here if the swell is here.

Clarks Beach to Main Beach

This beach runs from the end of The Pass back down to the carpark at the Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club. This is Byron Bay's main patrolled beach. The waves here are often fast and hollow but can often get small spilling waves depending on how big the swell is. There are both Lefts and Rights here, as long as the sandbanks are in good shape. There are often rocks along here that come and

The Pass

The most famous wave in the Bay, where you have all extremes in one wave, from the point, which is hollow and fast breaking all the way past the rocks, where you must be experienced. Once past the rocks, it will break towards Clarks Beach, where the waves are more spilling and more suited for beginners. The preferred winds are from the south to south east the same as Watego's, but can be surfed in all winds as it sometimes holds its shape with the on-shore winds. All swells will get in here; the size of the wave depends on the size of the swell. Big swells are not as good for learning as the sweep is always very strong. There are always plenty of surfers here, so surfing has to be tolerated. There are also the dive boats coming and going. Listen for the horns and watch for the boats.

Watego's Beach

Watego's Beach is the most easterly beach in the Bay. It is the first beach coming into the Bay. It is very popular with Longboarders and is a great family beach. The waves are mostly spilling and will break all the way to The Pass. The preferred wind is from the south to south

east, it will get choppy if the wind is too strong from the west and the north. All swells will get there, except a strong south swell. There is often a **sweep (side-shore current)** along this beach that will carry you towards the Rocks and The Pass. You must always watch for an exit point to avoid being carried past the end of the sand, otherwise you must keep surfing to The Pass. There are mainly rights with the odd left-hander breaking.



Tallow Beach

Tallow Beach is the long open beach on the southern side of the lighthouse. It is an open beach that will pick up all swells. It should only be surfed by experienced surfers, unless it is very, very small. The waves are fast and hollow, but can sometimes be spilling waves. It likes all winds from the north east, north west to south west. The waves will break, no matter how small the surf is. Lefts and rights. The south swell should be avoided, as this will push you onto and around the rocks. There are always RIPS and currents along this beach.

SurfWISE

Things to remember:

- Always **observe** the beach and its surrounds before entering the surf (rocks, reefs, sandbanks, shipwrecks, sweeps and rips, as well as other surfers)
- Always make yourself a **landmark** as you go out, the currents will carry you along before you even know.
- Only practice when it is **safe and small** and you are not going out of your ability.

Basic rules:

- **When learning**, keep clear from all other surfers and surf with a friend or tell your friends where you are going surfing.
- Do not surf where the experienced surfers are - until you are experienced.
- Do not catch a wave when there is someone already surfing it. The first person to catch the wave has **right of way** and the person closest to

the curl has right of way.

- Always paddle wide of a surfer riding a wave, choosing to go towards the white-water instead of towards the unbroken part of the wave.
- Always **land flat** when you fall off and cover your head as you come up for air.
- Always keep an eye on all swimmers, do not run them over.
- Never throw away your board when a wave comes, it is a danger to others.
- Always stay with your surfboard, it will keep you **afloat** for a long time.
- **Never panic**, always keep cool and stay calm.
- Always **communicate** to all other surfers as we are all out there together sharing all the waves.
- Give **respect** to gain respect.
- Always keep an eye out for anyone in trouble and please **help** them out or ask someone else to help.
- Always **keep smiling** and do not let any frustration get in your way of having fun.

- If you are a beginner at surfing, have a **lesson** with a reputable surfing school.

Your equipment:

- Always check your surfboard and leash are in **good condition**.
- Make sure it is the correct length, width and thickness of your board to **suit your ability**.
- Always **wax** your surfboard each time you surf.

The environment:

- Please **use the correct track** to and from the beach and stay off the sand dunes.
- Please **take all rubbish and butts** with you when you leave.
- Please **leave all sea-shells** on the beach.
- Leave all **animals at home** (unless it is a dog walking zone).
- Please have a quick shower after you surf. Be **waterwise**.

Editorial on pages 4-5 kindly provided by Style Surfing