



Coffs Coast's *not so* Wild Side

Most kids will absolutely love going on an adventure where they can try to spot koalas and kangaroos, kookaburras and cockatoos in their natural surroundings. Autumn on Coffs Coast is the perfect time to discover the area's fantastic nature trails, amazing animals, picturesque picnic spots and spectacular waterfalls and lookout points. In fact, Coffs Coast has more than its fair share of bushland, rife with all sorts of wildlife, and easily accessible from your coastal accommodation.

Bongil Bongil National Park

Just 15 minutes south of Coffs Harbour, between the villages of Sawtell and Mylestom, is Bongil Bongil National Park, which has the lot: unspoilt beaches, walking/cycling tracks, coastal dunes, estuaries, wetlands, littoral rainforests and a picnic areas with shelters, toilets and gas barbecues. The sheltered waterways of Pine Creek and Bonville Creek are ideal for fishing, kayaking and canoeing. Why not join a kayak tour on the National Park's pristine waters, offered by Liquid Assets Adventure Tours? They use double kayaks so parents and children can be paired together. An experienced instructor will ensure it will be an exciting and memorable adventure for all the family.

Bruxner Park Flora Reserve

For some of the best views over the whole of Coffs Harbour and out onto the Solitary Islands Marine Park, you don't need to go far. Pack a picnic and a camera, put your kids in the back seat, and take the short 10-minute drive up to Bruxner Park Flora Reserve, just north of Coffs Harbour. The winding road through the banana plantations is an adventure in itself, and the view from the top the reward. A number of short walks (1 to 3km) let you explore the ancient eucalypts and lavish rainforest in the reserve, and a game of "try to spot a koala" with the kids is always great fun. There are picnic and barbecue areas at Sealy Lookout, Halfway Creek and Swans Road Crossing, which is also where the walking trails begin.

Coffs Creek & Botanic Garden

Coffs Creek runs right through the city of Coffs Harbour, ending at Park Beach Reserve. An easy-grade combined walking and cycling track runs along both sides of the creek between the ocean and the city centre, taking you through bushland and wetlands and over bridges and boardwalks. The most popular (3km) stretch of the Coffs Creek Walk is that between the Pet Porpoise Pool and the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden. Take some bread to feed the fish in Coffs Creek, or fishing rods to catch them (check licensing regulations with the NSW Fisheries Department), or bring a picnic and enjoy lunch among the exotic plants and birdlife in the Botanic Garden. Within the Gardens, you can choose from various signposted walks through bushland, rainforest and mangroves. Your kids can run around freely on the spacious grassy areas. Soft drinks, ice creams and souvenirs are available at the Garden Shop.

Horse Rides through Bongil Bongil National Park & Newfoundland State Forest

If your kids like horses, they will love climbing on the back of one of the 60 friendly and well-disciplined horses or ponies at Valery Trails, and going for a ride through the rainforest. Valery Trails sits on the edge of pristine Bongil Bongil National Park, just 15 minutes south of Coffs Harbour. You can all take part in a guided one or two hour ride any morning or afternoon, or sign your young ones up for a two day/one night Kids Camp or Teenage Camp, which run during school holidays. Don't forget to bring swimsuits for a refreshing dip in the pool. Further north, Bushland Trail Rides runs special 2-hour family rides twice a day along hidden trails in the Newfoundland State Forest, home to countless birds and other native wildlife. Bushland Trail Rides is located in Halfway Creek, 40 minutes north of Coffs Harbour.

Dorrigo National Park & Rainforest Centre

There's no doubt about it: Dorrigo National Park is an absolute must-see destination on Coffs Coast. An hour's drive west of Coffs Harbour or Nambucca, the World Heritage-listed park is one of Australia's most accessible and spectacular rainforests. Kids will be amazed by this exciting 'other world', with sights, sounds and smells they've never experienced before. Start your journey at the Rainforest Centre, where the friendly staff will help you plan your adventure. Take a stroll on the skywalk and look down on the rainforest canopy and out over the mountains and valleys. Easy-graded walking tracks start right there, leading you over an elevated boardwalk, close to exotic birds, and through the rainforest to the cascading Crystal Shower Falls, which you can walk right under. You are just about guaranteed to see brush turkeys, and you'll be amazed by the variety of birds, lizards, wallabies and other wildlife rummaging around. National Parks and Wildlife Services run Discovery tours during school holidays, where kids can learn fun facts about native flora and fauna from knowledgeable Rangers.

Muttonbird Island Nature Reserve

Everyone, young and old, loves to go for a walk on Muttonbird Island. An easy stroll from Coffs Harbour's Jetty foreshores along the northern breakwall, past the Marina, will take you right to the foot of the island. Follow the paved path across the hilly island to the viewing platform on the other side (1km return), from where you may see dolphins and, from June to October, humpback whales. Colourful interpretive signs along the path explain the lifecycle and migration habits of the wedge-tailed shearwaters (muttonbirds), thousands of which live on the island between August and May. Make sure your kids stick to the path, as the birds' burrows are easily damaged. Great 360-degree views from the top, out over the Pacific Ocean and back onto Coffs Coast. A Discovery program run by National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers during the April school holidays features fun Muttonbird by Moonlight tours.



For more information about things to do and see on Coffs Coast, visit www.coffscost.com.au or contact the friendly staff at the Coffs Coast Visitor Information Centre on 1300 369 070

For further information on our National Parks, contact the Coffs Coast National Parks and Wildlife Service on (02) 6652 0900

