

Discover Long Reef - Early Farming Fact sheet **Beach - Bush - Birds**

Before European settlement the Long Reef area was most likely a complex ecosystem of lagoons, wetlands, coastal heath/grasslands, sand dunes and open Banksia woodlands.



History of early farming on Long Reef

As early as 1825 the Jenkins family farmed Long Reef headland, consisting of 500 acres of which 52 were cleared for farming. During the remainder of the 19th Century it was used for dairy farming, general grazing and the growing of crops, notably oats. At the end of the 1890's the estate was bequeathed to the Salvation Army and was continually farmed until 1912 when the Crown resumed the area as a park calling it Griffith Park. Stock was grazed on the upper part of the headland up until 1920 when council then leased part of it to Long Reef Golf Club to form a golf course. Farmers throughout NSW become increasingly impatient with the slow growing Australian native grasses and started importing lush European grasses. Native grasslands of south-eastern Australia are now less than 10,000 hectares - a 99 per cent loss of original grassland vegetation since European settlement a mere 200 years ago.

Indigenous Grasses - nine species found.

Long Reef's grasslands are dominated by Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*) - an important component of the headland character. It is genetically different (dwarf characteristics) to *Themeda* grass growing inland, even different to the grass in nearby Narrabeen.

Other native grasses are also found on Long Reef include:

- *Microlaena stipoides*, (Weeping grass)
- *Dichelachne crinita* (Plume grass)
- *Entolasia marginata* (Margined panic grass)
- *Echinopogon caespitosus* (Hedgehog grass)
- *Oplismenus imbecillis*. (Basket grass)
- *Imperata cylindrica*. (Blady grass).
- *Sporobolus virginicus* (Sand couch)
- *Zoysia macrantha*(Coastal couch)
- *Cynodon dactylon* (Common couch - naturalised.)

Source of information: Kathryn Wem NPWS, Warringah Council's Griffith Park Plan of Management and Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney (Les Robinson, 1991)