



**Marion Scrymgour**

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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## **FIRST NT CROC IN SPACE!**

In a Northern Territory first, a space satellite is monitoring the movements of a saltwater crocodile in the Adelaide River, near Darwin.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service staff have teamed with researchers from New Zealand's Massey University and fitted a satellite tracking device to the crocodile.

Parks and Wildlife Minister Marion Scrymgour said the first Territory croc in space – named 'Sputnik' - was a unique and innovative research project to be involved in.

"For Parks and Wildlife staff to be involved with international researchers in implementing the first NT crocodile satellite tracking program is fantastic for the Territory," Ms Scrymgour said.

"Not only will this assist with Parks and Wildlife's crocodile monitoring program, it gives an insight into how far crocodiles can travel in our region."

The satellite tracking device was fitted to a 4.2metre male crocodile, estimated to be aged between 30-50years old, in the Adelaide River five weeks ago.

Parks Australia North and Queensland Parks and Wildlife were also involved in the capture of the crocodile and fitting of the transmitter. Sputnik is the first NT crocodile to be involved in satellite tracking, previous efforts involved radio tracking and physically marking crocodiles and monitoring their movements.

"The study aims to learn more about the behaviour and movement of crocodiles, particularly problem crocodiles that move into Darwin Harbour and into the upstream reaches of freshwater rivers," Ms Scrymgour said.

"A website ([www.croctrack.org.nz](http://www.croctrack.org.nz)) has also been created where people can log on and check the movements of the crocodile.

"The satellite transmitter is attached to the crocodile's back and transmits a signal to a satellite recording the animal's location every four days – this process will occur over 12 months."

At this stage Sputnik has moved about 1km from where he was caught, although it's expected he will become more active during the build-up and during wet season floods.

Last year NT Parks and Wildlife rangers caught 218 crocodiles in Darwin Harbour and 10 crocodiles in the Katherine River.

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