



MEDIA RELEASE

Nitmiluk National Park Crocodile Management Update

Nitmiluk National Park rangers have been unable to confirm the report of a saltwater crocodile on October 12 this year.

Chief District Ranger Sarah Kerin said intensive aerial, land and water based surveys and trapping techniques had failed to confirm the sighting of a saltwater crocodile in the gorge, which was spotted by a canoeist two months ago.

“This has been the most intensive crocodile surveying we have done at the park in so short a space of time since it became jointly managed in 1989,” Ms Kerin said.

“We routinely maintain a trap in the gorge throughout the year but during the past two months we have doubled the trapping effort and conducted 30 day and night surveys totalling 438 surveillance hours.

“The surveys have included the use of a helicopter as well as night vision equipment kindly provided by RAAF Tindal to assist in the search effort.”

Ms Kerin said the freshwater crocodile population in the first three gorges has shown no change in its activity patterns or distribution along the waterhole since the alleged sighting of a saltwater crocodile.

She said the freshwater crocodile population is relatively stable and breeding and the three dominant animals, around the 3m mark, have continued to patrol their ranges and feed as usual during the period.

Ms Kerin said the gorge system is closed for swimming for the duration of the wet season with canoeing in the gorge system set to be reopened at the end of the week subject to water levels in the Katherine River.

Crocodile surveys will be ongoing during the wet season.

The last saltwater crocodile removed from Katherine Gorge was 3.46m long in 1999.

There have been eight saltwater crocodiles removed from the Katherine River this year, which is slightly above the annual average.

Media Note _ For more information contact Sarah Kerin on 8972 1886

Ends

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