



MEDIA RELEASE

Female Saltwater Crocodile Removed from Howard River

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) officers are urging people to exercise caution should they choose to undertake water-based activities at Howard River, Howard Springs, about 40km south of Darwin.

The warning comes after PWS officers removed a 3.2m long female saltwater crocodile from the river near the iron bridge on Saturday morning.

"We received a call during the middle of last week there could be a crocodile in the river after slide marks were spotted along the banks," PWS senior wildlife officer Tommy Nichols said.

"We placed two traps near the area and when I checked the traps on Saturday morning we found a 3.2m female saltwater crocodile in there before relocating her to the NT Crocodile Farm at Noonamah.

"The fact we caught a healthy female saltwater crocodile of about 12 to 15 years old in the area gives us reason to believe there could also be a male saltwater crocodile in the area as the weather hots up and the crocodile breeding season approaches.

"I urge everyone to refrain from swimming in the area and be particularly cautious should they undertake other activities such as fishing.

"It is not uncommon for us to remove saltwater crocodiles from the area, with one of the crocodiles removed from the area in recent years being 4.2m long."

Mr Nichols said the warning for people to exercise caution at Howard River should be extended to all Top End rivers as humidity and temperatures rise.

"Saltwater crocodiles, especially males, will be on the move looking for mates during coming weeks and as they battle for territory, it may force some of the smaller crocodiles to relocate somewhere else and as we all know saltwater crocodiles can be extremely dangerous, especially if agitated," Mr Nichols said.

"We will continue to trap and remove saltwater crocodiles if possible from areas where they might pose a threat to human, animal and pet safety."

Mr Nichols said 155 saltwater crocodiles had been removed from Darwin Harbour this year as part of the Darwin Harbour Crocodile Management Plan.

He said this number is 15 more than for the same time last year with a total of 223 saltwater crocodiles removed from Darwin Harbour in 2005. People can report saltwater crocodile sightings by calling 0419 822 859.

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Tommy Nichols on 0419 822 859

Issued: 11am Monday, 25 September 2006