

Media Release:

28.02.11

Unauthorised Entries to Manton Dam Risking Lives

Members of the public have been recklessly putting their lives at risk by entering Manton Dam Recreation Area, which is closed due to heavy rains and an increased likelihood of estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles entering this area.

The area has been subject to a spate of unauthorised entries since being closed to the public as a result of recent heavy rains brought on by ex-Tropical Cyclone Carlos, increasing the risk of estuarine crocodiles being present.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Director of Park Operations Digby Whyte said members of the public entering the area are recklessly risking their lives and exposing others to risk who innocently enter afterwards, as estuarine crocodiles may be present.

“During the closure, the padlock on the main gate was smashed off three times to open the gate and the boundary fence adjacent to the locked gate was also cut, amounting to approximately \$200 worth of damage,” Mr Whyte said.

“Parks and Wildlife Rangers observed vehicle tracks accessing the park through the cut fence and we have received reports that members of the public were swimming and waterskiing on Sunday, 27 February 2011.

“Parks and Wildlife Rangers have some unconfirmed crocodile sightings since commencing crocodile surveys of Manton Dam Recreation Area on Wednesday, 23 February.

“As it has not yet been deemed safe for swimming, the members of the public that opened the gate are putting themselves at risk, as well as others that might follow unaware that the area is closed.

“Until Parks and Wildlife Rangers have no confirmed sightings of estuarine crocodiles in an area across five consecutive nights of crocodile surveying, the area will not be re-opened to the public.

“Parks and Wildlife Rangers will continue to survey the area until they can determine there are no estuarine crocodiles present, and until such time it is critical that the public ‘Be Crocwise’ and obey closures of Parks and Reserves.”

The incidents have been reported to Northern Territory Police who are investigating the matter and member of the public are urged to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 if they have further information.

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) urges the public to **BE CROCWISE** and remember that croc danger is real, so don't risk your life.

Manton Dam Recreation Area will re-open once crocodile surveys are complete and the area is deemed safe by Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service.

For up to date information regarding access to parks and reserves administered by NRETAS go to www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Digby Whyte on 8999 4561.

Images – Park Ranger Mark Mick at Manton Dam Recreation Area and Park Ranger Dani Best repairing the fence cut by vandals to gain illegal entry to Manton Dam Recreation Area.

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