

**Question on Notice  
No. 1849  
Asked on Wednesday, 26 November 2008**

QUESTION:

**MR GIBSON** asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) –

Will he advise (a) what risk assessments are undertaken for the relocation of crocodiles by the Environmental Protection Agency and (b) the specific risks identified for the relocation of the crocodile known as 'Whitey' to the Townsville region?

ANSWER:

**a)** Crocodiles are not currently relocated and, if one is determined to be a danger to humans, it is removed to a captive environment. If they were to be returned to the wild, a formal risk assessment, including a review at the highest level of authority, will be undertaken.

**b)** The assessment of the proposed relocation of the crocodile known as 'Whitey' identified that:

- the crocodile had been captured as a non target crocodile;
- the crocodile had not demonstrated any history of being of concern;
- the crocodile was mature and represented an opportunistic candidate to further test relocation as a management tool; and
- the release site was identified by:
  - distance from capture;
  - low crocodile density; and
  - remoteness (being within protected estate).

The likelihood of the animal moving to a populated area and causing risk to human safety was considered as low because:

- the release site was 60 kilometres south of Townsville by navigable waterway.
- the release site has a very low density of crocodiles (<.05 non hatchling crocodiles per kilometre of waterway);
- the release waterway incurs recreational fishing activity, but that activity is mainly vessel based, and the waterways are well signed with crocodile warning signs;
- should the crocodile demonstrate homing behaviour, it would likely move north rapidly and purposefully and it would be unlikely that it would move to and remain in a populated area;
- the animal was fitted with a satellite transmitter to monitor its movement;
- should the animal move to a populated area then the Environmental Protection Agency could monitor its movement and if needed, target the animal for removal; and
- there was no increased risk posed from those already in existence in the environment which is populated by crocodiles and other dangerous marine wildlife.

The animal did not behave as predicted but a subsequent necropsy by a highly qualified veterinarian determined that the crocodile was in a debilitated state due to the ingestion of plastic.