

Question on Notice

No. 552

Asked on Wednesday, 10 May 2023

MR S ANDREW ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (HON M SCANLON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the department's protocols under Queensland's Crocodile Management Plan (CMP) and DES website advice that any 2+ metre crocodiles residing in areas frequented by large numbers of people will be targeted for removal, and reports of Rockhampton Water Ski Club users being stalked by an aggressive, 4 metre crocodile for the last month in an area 5 km upstream from the public boat ramps which fall within Zone C, a 'targeted management zone'—

Will the Minister advise why the protocols are not being followed for this area of the Fitzroy River?

ANSWER [MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS (HON L LINARD)]:

I thank the Member for the question.

On 18 May 2023, I was appointed as Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs and as such, I am now the responsible Minister to answer this Question.

The Queensland Crocodile Management Plan reflects the Queensland Government's commitment to a crocodile management program that delivers appropriate protection of public safety while enabling the ongoing survival of crocodiles in the wild. The approach to the management of crocodiles adopted in the Queensland Crocodile Management Plan is based on crocodile management zones which are determined based on the overall risk to public safety. The sections of the Fitzroy River near Rockhampton are designated as Zone C which is a 'targeted management zone' as it is frequented by large numbers of people, due to being near an urban centre and is also frequented by crocodiles. The management objective for Zone C is to reduce the likelihood of a crocodile attack hence, all crocodiles two metres or greater in length and also displaying dangerous behaviour are targeted for removal.

Between 30 March 2023 and 29 May 2023, Department of Environment and Science expert wildlife officers investigated reported crocodile sightings submitted for the Zone C section of the Fitzroy River through daytime and nocturnal surveys.

Following a further report on 27 May 2023 wildlife officers undertook nocturnal surveys on 27 May and 29 May 2023. On 29 May 2023 a total of five crocodiles were observed, two of which were two metres or less in length; two which were detected only by eye-shine such that the size of the animals could not be confirmed; and a single animal which was estimated to be approximately 2.8 metres in length.

On the basis that officers confirmed the presence of a 2.8 metre crocodile in that area and that it is classified Zone C, the animal has been declared for targeted removal and a trap has been deployed.

While the removal of large crocodiles or crocodiles displaying dangerous behaviour in Zone C will reduce the immediate risk of a negative interaction with a crocodile, such action will not eliminate the overall risk that crocodiles pose to humans in the area.

As this section of the Fitzroy River is located within what is recognised as “Croc country” the adoption of “Crocwise” behaviours and adherence to safety messages by users of the river is extremely important.