

# BE CROCWISE

## What is CROCWISE

When it comes to crocodiles, the Northern Territory (NT) Government takes your safety seriously, but ultimately how you behave around crocodile habitats is your responsibility. Any body of water in the Top End may contain large and potentially dangerous crocodiles.

The NT Government Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT actively manages saltwater crocodiles to reduce the risk of crocodile attack across the Top End, with the exception of Australian Government controlled lands such as Kakadu National Park.

In the Top End, many people live and participate in recreation activities in and near the water. People need to BE CROCWISE and know how to enjoy the waters safely.

CROCWISE integrates public education and active crocodile management by the Northern Territory Government to reduce the risk of crocodile attacks in the Top End.

## Changing public behaviour around water

To be safe the public need to understand the risks and appropriate behaviours so that they can make informed, sensible choices to enable them to stay safe in and around Top End waters.

CROCWISE behaviour is the most important way to reduce the risk of a crocodile attack in the Northern Territory.

Territorians can not become complacent. You need to be cautious every time you go near or in a waterway in the Top End.

## Principles behind CROCWISE

### **Saltwater crocodiles are common in the Northern Territory and pose a significant risk to human life**

Top End waterways are some of the best remaining habitats for saltwater crocodiles in the world. There is estimated to be over 100,000 saltwater crocodiles in the NT at the moment. Population studies indicate that saltwater crocodile populations are stabilising in some rivers; the average size is increasing as the population ages; more animals are moving further upstream and into more marginal habitats.

There are important reasons to continue to protect and manage saltwater crocodiles in the NT:

- They are internationally threatened.
- They are a top order predator and a critical part of the aquatic environment.
- They are an iconic species throughout northern Australia.
- They have cultural and social significance to Aboriginal people.
- They are a valuable tourist attraction.
- Harvesting crocodile eggs from the wild is an important part of the crocodile industry in the NT.

## **People live and participate in recreational activities in or near waterways where saltwater crocodiles live**

Most Territory towns and urban areas are established on the coast, harbours or rivers. These are all places where saltwater crocodiles live. Darwin is located close to the Adelaide River flood-plain, one of the best breeding areas for saltwater crocodiles in the world, and the expansion of Darwin into the rural areas is bringing more people closer to significant populations of crocodiles.

Many of the recreational activities enjoyed by Territorians and visitors to the Top End, such as fishing, swimming, camping, boating, wildlife viewing and bushwalking, can bring people and crocodiles close together, increasing the subsequent risk of a fatal crocodile attack. This risk is increasing due to changes in both crocodile and human populations.

## **In areas where saltwater crocodiles live, there are no guarantees that a natural waterway is 100% safe**

Crocodile management activities such as surveying, trapping and removing saltwater crocodiles are used to reduce the risk of crocodile attacks in many locations across the Top End. In some places, the risk of a saltwater crocodile entering the area is reduced to a level where it is possible to recommend swimming. However, even in those locations there is still a small risk that a saltwater crocodile may enter an area unobserved. In all other locations, people need to assume that a saltwater crocodile could be present at any time and behave accordingly.

## **Only swim where there are designated safe swimming signs**

Designated safe swimming signs are erected in locations that are considered safe from crocodiles, such as Berry Springs Nature Park and Litchfield National Park.

Although warning signs have a role to play, it is not possible to have warning signs at every location across the NT that saltwater crocodiles may inhabit. It should be assumed that any water body in the saltwater crocodile's natural range in the NT is unsafe to swim, unless signposted otherwise.

## **Your personal safety is your responsibility**

Safe behaviour in and around Top End waterways is important. Think about your actions and do not become complacent.

The safety of the public depends largely on public behaviour to reduce the risk of a crocodile attack. Do not behave recklessly and place yourself at risk.

## **The NT Government has a strategic approach to saltwater crocodile management**

The NT Government Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT has dedicated and active saltwater crocodile management programs for a number of public water bodies, to reduce the likelihood of a fatal crocodile attack. Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT assess the potential risk of crocodiles to determine the level of management activity for any given area.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT assists other landowners and managers to manage crocodiles on their land. However, responsibility for public safety on those lands remains the responsibility of the landowners and managers.

The Australian Government has responsibility for crocodile management on their land, such as Kakadu National Park.

**For further information visit [www.nt.gov.au/becrocwise](http://www.nt.gov.au/becrocwise)**