No ‘stupidity’ fines as fishos cast off in croc-infested areas

By CONOR BYRNE

EVIDENCE of fishos defying the jaws of nature in croc-infested waters has emerged. This fisho was spotted fishing the run-off on Shady Camp barrage on the Mary River on Sunday. The area is estimated to have the highest concentration of crocs in the Top End.

Croc ranger Tom Nichols said: “It happens every year with the run-off and the desire to catch barra”. “There are signs there and the fishos have been warned by fisheries and by rangers.”

Mr Nichols said fishos on the barrage were warned about every second day. He said Parks and Wildlife was unable to impose fines. “All we can do is say people have got to be aware,” he said. “We can’t fine them for stupidity. We haven’t had any incidents there, which is unusual for the area.”

Pressed to put a number on crocs in that area, he agreed on hundreds. “I’d just be guessing but it has the highest concentration of crocs in the Top End,” he said. Amateur Fisherman’s Association executive Craig Ingram condemned the activity. “I think people should be very careful about crocodile safety across the NT,” he said.

“There’s a lot of evidence that people need to take more care on land and on boats. It’s a real risk. People need to make sure they’re safe in what they do. “We encourage people to make sure they’re aware of crocs and be aware there are some real risks and people need to be responsible for their behaviour. “We don’t condone anything which is high-risk activity – standing in knee-deep water is not something you can say is safe. The likelihood of something happening is high.”

Fresh look at habitats

RESEARCHERS from Charles Darwin University and NT Fisheries are using radio-tracking technology to find out where barramundi and forktail catfish are moving throughout the wet season. The findings will feed into a project investigating the key factors that support aquatic habitats and activities are growing and reproducing.

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