

Be Croc Aware: 4 simple messages

1. Crocs are common.
2. Crocs move around.
3. Crocs are deadly.
4. Be Crocwise

Be CROCWISE: Enjoy the waterways safely

- Read and remember this advice about crocodiles before swimming, camping, fishing or boating.
- If in doubt do not swim, canoe or use small boats where crocodiles may live. Crocodiles inhabit a wide variety of inland and coastal waterways and water bodies across northern Australia, both fresh and saltwater, including estuaries, tidal rivers, river pools and the waters around offshore islands.
- Always read and obey warning signs. They are there for your protection. Some locations where crocodiles live may have warning signs but most do not, therefore do not assume the absence of signs means that it is safe to swim. If you don't know, then don't go.
- Avoid the water's edge wherever possible. Children and pets are at particular risk.
- Always keep a lookout for crocodiles. But be aware that a crocodile can remain hidden underwater for long periods and so you may not see it all.
- Camp at least 50 metres from the water's edge.
- Don't paddle, clean fish, prepare food or wash at the water's edge or adjacent to sloping banks. Fill a bucket and do your chores at least 50 metres away.
- Stand at least 5 metres back from the water's edge when fishing.
- Don't stand on logs overhanging the water.
- Don't dispose of food scraps or fish offal in the water. Use bins or bury at least 2 metres from the water's edge.
- Avoid returning regularly to the same spot at the water's edge.
- Be vigilant when launching or retrieving your boat. Activity and noise can attract a crocodile's attention.
- Don't hang arms or legs out of or lean over the edge of a boat when on the water. This includes boats near or at the shoreline.
- Stay away from crocodile slide marks and nest mounds.
- Be extra vigilant at night and during the breeding season (November to April).
- Don't feed, harass, encourage or try to interact with crocodiles.
- Don't interfere with crocodile traps. They are set where there is an identified nuisance crocodile.
- Your personal safety is your responsibility.

For more information on Be CROCWISE visit www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



BE CROCWISE 

Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodile Myths

- **Estuarine crocodiles only live in saltwater. FALSE** ... They can be found over 200km from the coast in freshwater habitats (rivers and billabongs).
- **Estuarine crocodiles don't like fast flowing water. FALSE** ... Crocodiles have often been seen in fast flowing water and they move through rapids to reach different parts of their territory. They have also been seen in surf.
- **Estuarine crocodiles don't like beaches and you are safe to swim in these areas. FALSE** ... Crocodiles are often seen around beaches in the Kimberley.
- **Crocodiles do not travel up waterfalls. FALSE** ... They have been seen climbing the rock faces of waterfalls. They will often go around a vertical obstacle like a waterfall to make it to the next pool upstream. The main reason is that young male crocodiles will be trying to establish their own territories.
- **Crocodiles will not stay long in small waterholes. FALSE** ... They can stay for extended periods in very small waterholes and mud holes if they have to.
- **Crocodiles don't move around on land very much. FALSE** ... Crocodiles have been known to travel on land up to 1 kilometre.
- **Estuarine crocodiles have never been seen here in the past so they obviously don't live here. FALSE** ... Crocodile numbers are still increasing and therefore are spreading and repopulating areas they would have occupied before nearly being wiped out in the late 60s and early 70s.
- **Crocodiles are less active in the dry season so you are less likely to be attacked. FALSE** ... Crocodiles are opportunistic hunters and will take advantage of an easy feed if presented with one.
- **Crocodiles can't open their mouth underwater therefore can't attack underwater. FALSE** ... Crocodiles have a palatal valve at the back of their mouth, which closes when underwater. However crocodiles need to be in shallow water or on land to swallow food without taking in water.
- **Crocodiles in the Kimberley are too well fed to take humans. FALSE** ... Once again, crocodiles are opportunistic feeders.
- **You can outwit a crocodile by running from them in a zigzag pattern. FALSE** ... Run as fast as you can in a straight line as crocodiles can only manage short bursts of speed when coming out of the water but cannot sustain this for long.
- **Crocodiles can swim up to 60km/hour. FALSE** ... Crocodiles can swim about 10-15km/h on average.
- **Crocodiles are sluggish creatures. FALSE** ... When charging from the water crocodiles have been measured moving at 12 metres per second.
- **You're safe to camp beside the river if you have a fire. FALSE** ... There is no scientific evidence to support this. Always camp more than 50 metres away from the water.
- **If you can see the bottom, it's safe to swim. FALSE** ... All bodies of water in the Kimberley may have crocodiles present no matter what the depth may be.
- **You're safe in the water when launching a boat because boat noise frightens crocodiles. FALSE** ... Crocodiles are extremely sensitive to sound and vibration, which in most cases will attract them.
- **It's OK to swim if you don't stay in too long. FALSE** ... It takes less than a second to be attacked by a crocodile.