

# Queensland crocodile management update 2017

## Crocodile management overview

In 2017, the Queensland Government introduced an enhanced crocodile management program, to be delivered by the Department of Environment and Science (DES). The program has three parts:

- **Crocodile monitoring program**—in 2017 DES began a three-year estuarine crocodile monitoring program and related crocodile research.
- **Crocodile management**—DES operates a CrocWatch telephone service for reporting crocodile sightings to DES; investigates every crocodile sighting report it receives; installs temporary and permanent warning signs; removes ‘problem crocodiles’; and operates a publicly accessible CrocWatch database outlining crocodile management actions by DES.
- **Risk reduction through ‘Crocwise’ public education**—DES delivers a public awareness program, promoting safe behaviour by residents of, and visitors to, areas of crocodile habitat (‘Croc country’) in consultation with local governments and other stakeholders, including the tourism sector and Surf Life Saving Queensland.

This update gives a snapshot of achievements under each part of the program during 2017.

## Crocodile monitoring program

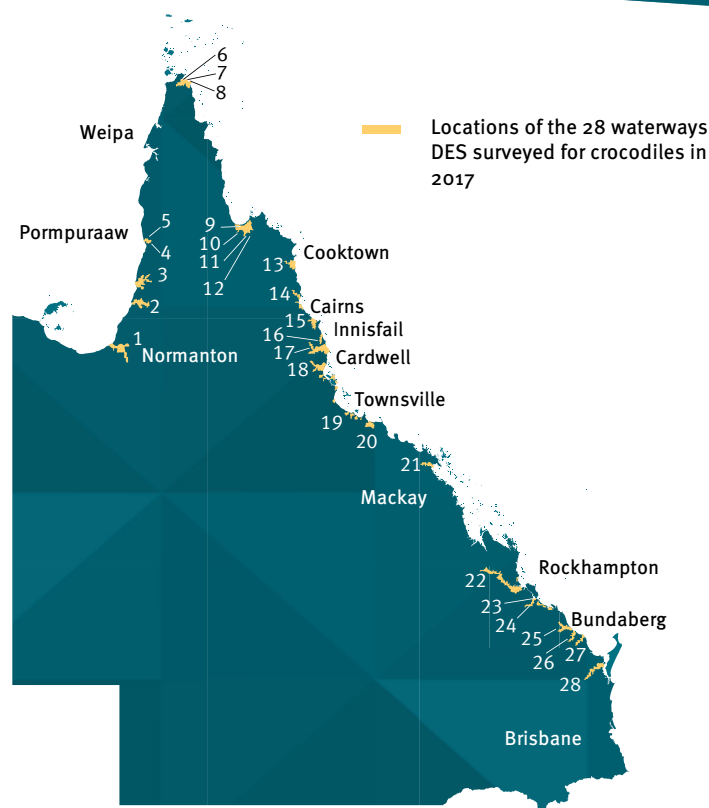
In April 2017, DES started a three-year estuarine crocodile monitoring program, involving vessel-based and helicopter surveys in selected waterways across ‘croc’ country.

The program has been reviewed and endorsed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Crocodile Specialist Group, which includes the world’s leading experts in crocodile biology and monitoring.

The objective of the monitoring program is to provide definitive information about crocodile populations in Queensland, including by sizes of the animals, and whether crocodile populations are increasing, decreasing or remaining steady at different places across their range.

## Crocodile management—under a new Crocodile Management Plan

The Queensland Crocodile Management Plan, released in March 2017, established six new crocodile management zones setting out how DES would manage wild crocodiles in each zone—depending on the size, location and behaviour of each animal sighted.

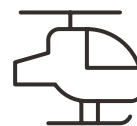


**1380 km**  
vessel-based surveys



**28**  
river systems

**800 km**  
helicopter-based surveys



**8**  
river systems



**684\***  
estuarine crocodile sightings reported



**84**  
problem crocodiles removed



**11**  
crocodiles reported deceased

\*The number of sighting reports is not directly related to the number of crocodiles in the environment. Some crocodiles are reported several times. The number of sighting reports has increased in recent years as the DES CrocWatch service has become better known.

DES encourages everyone who sees a crocodile to report the sighting to DES by calling the DES CrocWatch number, **1300 130 372**. DES investigates every crocodile sighting report it receives and, in keeping with the Crocodile Management Plan, seeks to remove any animal assessed as being a 'problem crocodile'. DES' historic and recent responses to each the crocodile sighting reports receives can be viewed on the DES website using the [CrocWatch link](https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/livingwith/crocodiles/crocwatch) (https://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/livingwith/crocodiles/crocwatch).

Eight suspected unlawful crocodile killings were investigated by DES in 2017, often in cooperation with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). Three people were prosecuted for killing crocodiles in 2017.

In 2017 the government introduced new laws and penalties for people interfering with crocodile traps, which are used to help keep Queenslanders safe. Interfering with traps prevents DES removing problem crocodiles and places other people at risk. People have already been fined for breaking these new laws.

## Risk reduction through Crocwise public education during 2017

DES Crocwise educational activities aim to reach as many people as possible across Croc country to inform people on how to behave safely in areas of crocodile habitat, through public forums, meeting with clubs and groups and presenting to school students.



**100**

DES Crocwise presentations



**50,000+**

people reached about Crocwise behavior



**20**

new Crocwise safety products

During 2017 DES continued to hold Crocwise Roundtable meetings with stakeholders from the community, state government, local government, the tourism sector and the conservation movement. These forums allowed DES to hear from well-informed stakeholders about how to improve the effectiveness of Crocwise safety messaging, based on sharing information, collaboration and the use of vital local knowledge about local communities.

In 2017, DES provided 438 responses to media enquiries and gave 47 media interviews about crocodiles.

**In 2017 DES provided Crocodile Management Training** to members of SLSQ, QPS and Aboriginal and Torres Straight Land and Sea Ranger groups – including: Jabalbina Land and Sea Rangers at Mossman and Wujal Wujal; Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Land and Sea Rangers from Normanton, Karumba and Mornington Island; and Gunggandji and Djunbunji Land and Sea Rangers from Yarrabah. These groups provided DES with valuable assistance with crocodile management and the promotion of Crocwise messaging during 2017.



**53 crocodile competency certificates** were issued to people from these groups who received crocodile management training from DES during 2017.

