

**Kimberley Land Council**

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**Aboriginal rangers capture cranky croc**

The Nyikina Mangala Rangers have captured and relocated a cranky 3.2m crocodile after it had become a threat to public safety.

The male croc had reportedly been lunging at locals and displaying aggressive behaviour to those threatening its territory at the popular Minnie Bridge camping and fishing area along the Fitzroy River near Willare – about 160km north of Broome.

Nyikina Mangala ranger Kimberley Watson, who works for the Kimberley Land Council, said the crocodile was the second his team had captured in the last two months, after they trapped a 3.6m rogue in May at another camping area on the Fitzroy River.

“Locals swim, camp and fish at the spot where we caught the croc. He wasn’t shy and you would see him on the bank every day. But because he became intimidating and aggressive, it was time to move him,’’ he said.

“We knew exactly where he was because there’s this little pool where he hangs out and there were tracks and big slides along the river bank.

“We found a nice little area where the water comes up and set the trap up there, using fresh beef as bait. It took a little while, maybe a week or so but we caught him in the end.

“The crocodile was a healthy male in the prime of its life, so the Malcolm Douglas Crocodile Park, where we relocated it to, was pretty happy to have him because they said he’s going to be good breeding stock.’’

Kimberley said his group had stepped up their efforts to monitor and manage aggressive crocodiles in the interests of public safety.

“An aggressive crocodile this size can be a threat to locals and tourists and we don’t want anyone to get hurt,’’ he said.

“We don’t want to remove all the crocodiles from the Fitzroy River. People have to understand that this is the crocodile’s home and they have to be aware of that. It’s just about explaining this to people and educating them.

“Saltwater crocodile numbers are increasing and we are seeing them migrate up the river and into pools and fishing places where we’ve never seen them before.

 “We all know that crocodiles are there so everyone needs to be careful when they go out fishing and camping. If you make sure you clean your fish away from the water’s edge and keep the camp ground clean, there shouldn’t be any problems.’’

All crocodile sightings in the Fitzroy River area should be reported to the Nyikina Mangala Rangers on

(08) 9191 7960.

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