

## Dead crocodiles found on same day is 'coincidence'

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THE Department of Environment and Conservation said it was probably coincidental two crocodiles were found dead, one in Arnhem Land and one near Broome, on the same day last week.

The DEC is investigating a dead 4m saltwater crocodile found at Crab Creek, south of Broome, last Monday.

DEC West Kimberley Wildlife Officer Peter Carstairs said the crocodile appeared to have been shot by a high-powered rifle about two to three weeks ago.

"Decomposition suggests that it has been a few weeks since the animal was killed and teeth are missing from the skull, suggesting they have been collected by poachers as trophies," he said.

Also last week, Northern Territory media reported a dead crocodile found near Maningrida, in Arnhem Land, missing a tail and with its mouth propped open with a stick.

The report said the crocodile was confirmed to have been shot by traditional owners for food as part of ceremony, but authorities had been unable to verify the incident in relation to the mouth being propped open with a stick.

Mr Carstairs said in WA, crocodiles were listed as specially protected fauna under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 and the penalty for killing protected fauna was a fine of up to \$10,000.

In July this year, two men were heavily fined after pleading guilty to charges relating to separate cases of illegal possession of crocodile remains.



DEC ranger Preston Manado with the dead 4m saltwater crocodile found at Crab Creek last Monday.

Picture: DEC

## Marine fauna top list of hub concerns

He agreed individual whales would be affected by the gas hub and there were dolphin species "we don't know anything as much about" in the region.

However, people could not dispute the EPA's conclusion whales would not be threatened as a species by the proposed gas hub, he said.

"The EPA is... very concerned about protecting the whales ... but their advice to government overall is based on whether there's a threat to the species," he said.

Appointed by Minister for the Environment Bill Marmion to consider appeals as a committee, Dr

"significant amount" of monsoon vine thickets on the coast to make way for the gas development.

The remnant rainforest was important natural heritage and key habitat for native fauna as well as a food source for Aboriginals, he said.

"I'm concerned about the monsoon vine thickets ... I'll be looking at it more carefully," he said. "It seems to me a totally precious resource and quite endemic to the ecological system ... if you remove that, it's going to be a problem."

Dr Green said as a result of international experts finding dinosaur trackways on the Dampier Peninsula, the northern Penin-

the proposed port - the seabed would be "dead, gone, not coming back."

But around it, the seagrass was expected to recover within five years of dredging.

Dr Green said he would recommend changes to the 29 conditions attached to project in his report to Mr Marmion but declined to reveal them.

Kimberley naturalist Richard Costin said it was almost impossible to have any faith in the assessment process.

He said as well as posing a serious threat to individual whales, the project would reduce the amount of undisturbed habitat

had been moved down 900m. However, other prints which could be buried under the sand further south would "have to go".

"Obviously, that's still an issue for many people," he said.

Dr Green disagreed that research paid for by the proponents should not have been accepted by the EPA or that community research had more validity than studies conducted by international experts.

He also disputed claims dredging plumes had the potential to ruin in Cable Beach, saying they would be about the same intensity as those stirred up by a storm. He agreed that in the "high-