Bellinger River Snapping Turtle awareness signs

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Bellingen Shire Council have erected information signs at 17 key locations along the Bellinger River informing the community about best practices while using the river.

NPWS Dorrigo Plateau Area Manager, Janelle Brooks said that signage was raised as an issue in the community information session last Monday 23rd March and staff immediately got to creating the signs to be installed by Council.

“The signs inform river users about not handling the turtles, using clean swimming gear when swimming at multiple locations, and washing down watercraft with soapy water,” she said.

“These protocols are to help stop the spread of disease into areas of the river not yet infected and also other river catchments.

“The signs also give the number to call if you find a sick or dead turtle, which is 131 555,” Ms Brooks said.

“Diagnostic testing is still underway to try to identify the cause of this epidemic in the Bellinger River Snapping Turtles,” she said.

Bellingen Shire Council Manager of Sustainable Environment and Waste, Daan Schiebaan said that the signs were installed last Friday 27th March.

“Council installed the signs at key locations along the Bellinger River from Lavenders Bridge in Bellingen to Guess’ Bridge at Darkwood, including at popular swimming spots such at The Point,” said Mr Schiebaan.

“Council is continuing to work together with NPWS in the collection of any sick turtles that are reported.”

Report any sick or dead turtle sightings to the EPA Environment line on 131 555.

ENDS.

Attachment 1: Photo caption- Turtle sign installed at The Point swimming spot, Bellinger River.

Attachment 2: PDF of the turtle sign