

# NEWS RELEASE

## RED EARED SLIDER TURTLES ARRIVE IN RECENT RAIN

**DATE RELEASED: THURSDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2008**

Gold Coast residents are urged to keep an eye out for red eared slider turtles after recent rain led to one of the highly aggressive pests being handed in to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.

Red eared slider turtles can be identified by the way they draw their heads straight back, unlike native species, which tuck their heads in on the side.

Also, they usually have distinctive red stripes behind each eye and are an 'extreme risk' to biodiversity according to Biosecurity Queensland, a specialist group of the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F).

Scott O'Keeffe from the DPI&F Red Eared Slider Turtle Eradication Program praised the actions of the local resident who turned over the turtle to the Currumbin Sanctuary, and has urged others to follow suit.

"They might look cute, but red eared slider turtles are a very serious pest that can cause problems for Queensland wildlife," he said.

"Not only are they very aggressive, red eared slider turtles can multiply rapidly and spread throughout local waterways carrying diseases that could affect native turtles and other wildlife.

"It's very important that if anyone finds or sees a suspect turtle they call their local council pest management officer or DPI&F on 13 25 23 immediately."

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Curator of Life Sciences and Interpretation, Matt Hingley, said it was important to encourage the diligent identification of this exotic turtle species.

"The slider is an attractive species, although its introduction poses a great threat to the ecological balance of our beautiful local creeks," Mr Hingley said.

"We are very fortunate in Australia to have such a wide range of native turtle with around thirty species currently recognised.

"Australians generally have a love for turtles and have always kept them as pets.

"We encourage and provide information on the responsible care of captive turtles and would like the community to assist in discouraging the illegal exotic pet turtle trade."

For more information about red eared slider turtles, or the work of Biosecurity Queensland, visit [www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au).

**ENDS**

**Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries**  
Amity Sturwohld 3224 8837

**Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary**  
Curator of Life Sciences and Interpretation Matt Hingley 0423 988 033