



SLOW DOWN - TURTLES ON THE MOVE

Freshwater turtles taking advantage of the rains which have filled the lagoons and floodplains around Rockhampton are being killed as they cross roads to find mates and nesting areas.

Capricorn Conservation Coordinator, Michael McCabe said today, “We are receiving reports of numerous turtles being killed or badly injured by vehicles when the turtles try to cross roads. Specimens of the Fitzroy River turtle *Rheodytes leukops* which is listed as vulnerable, and found only in the Fitzroy system, have been killed along the Ridgeland Road. This species is already under enormous pressure from dams, mining and agricultural water use, predation by feral animals and trampling of nests by stock accessing the river,” Mr McCabe said.

“In the same way that DERM advises boat owners to ‘*go slow for those below*’ to allow turtles to avoid boat strike, CCC urges motorists to slow down on roads beside lagoons and creeks. This is advisable anyway due the possibility of washouts or flooding,” Mr McCabe said. “In addition to the numerous turtle deaths, the long roadside grass and raised water levels have brought waterfowl closer to roadways and caution is urged for both wildlife and traffic safety”.

Mr McCabe said, “CCC would like to see the installation of road signs around our extensive wetland systems to alert drivers to the locations of turtle and other wildlife crossings. A system similar to the one in Tasmania which places reduced speed limits from dusk, or during key breeding seasons would be ideal.”