

Turtle death highlights need to keep dogs home overnight

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Locals were disappointed yesterday morning upon discovering a large, female flatback turtle had been attacked and killed by a dog on North Harbour Beach.

She was the first turtle to visit North Harbour Beach this nesting season, and was attempting to lay eggs in the sand dunes.

Reef Catchments Coastal Project Officer Cass Hayward said, “There was evidence that she had been bitten on both front flippers, as well as one of her rear flippers. There was also a large bite taken out of her neck, which we suspect caused her to bleed to death. It was obvious the dog had followed her down the beach, biting her, while she tried to get back to the water.”

This isn’t the first time that a turtle has been attacked by a dog in our region. There was a similar attack in Seaforth last year, and Blacks Beach and Sarina Beach in years before that.

Worldwide, six of the seven species of sea turtles are classified as Vulnerable or Endangered.

“Turtles are extremely important to our region. They are an iconic tourism species for the Great Barrier Reef, but they also play a vital part in the ecosystem. We need to protect them,” Cass said.

“The main take home message from this is to ensure that you are being a responsible pet owner. Keeping your dogs contained at night is not only safer for them, but protects wildlife too.”

Fay Griffin, Education Officer for Mackay and District Turtle Watch, said, “It’s now turtle nesting season, and turtles will be laying until mid-January. We ask people to please make sure their dogs are locked in at night, particularly those in beachside areas, to prevent this from happening again.”

For interviews and comment, please contact direct:

Fay Griffin – Education Officer for Mackay and District Turtle Watch - 4954 9613
Cass Hayward – Coasts and Biodiversity Project Officer Reef Catchments
– 0429 155 841 – cass.hayward@reefcatchments.com