

# WILDLIFE ADVOCATE

Representing The Quiet Australian

## ISSUE

### Safari Hunting of Saltwater Crocodiles in the Northern Territory

#### Background

In April 2009 the Northern Territory government release for public consultation its *draft Management Program for the Saltwater Crocodile (2009-2013)*.

The draft management plan focussed on managing crocodile numbers, especially in areas frequented by residents of, and visitors to, the Northern Territory. In doing so, the Northern Territory government foreshadowed the need to take from the wild

- 50,000 live eggs per annum;
- 500 hatchlings;
- 400 juveniles; and
- 500 adults

The Northern Territory government also foreshadowed the introduction of safari hunting as a means to generate additional income for local aboriginal communities.

#### Action

This is not the first time the Northern Territory government has sought federal government approval to allow safari hunting of saltwater crocodiles.

On previous occasions, Wildlife Advocate and other conservation groups have successfully argued against safari hunting. Wildlife Advocate's arguments focussed on the lack of control over the conduct of the safari hunts and the probability that the death of targeted crocodiles may not be humane.

Wildlife Advocate's arguments obviously struck a cord with the Northern Territory and federal government's alike. In the current attempt to introduce safari hunting has addressed all of our previous concerns.

Wildlife Advocate's sole remaining significant issue with the draft management plan was whether the taking (including killing) of saltwater crocodiles is at all necessary to manage the interface between crocodiles and humans. Wildlife Advocate argued that the more effective means of managing this interface was not to remove the crocodiles from saltwater estuaries, but to remove humans from these high risk areas.

Time will tell whether Wildlife Advocate's arguments will once again resonate with the Northern Territory and federal governments.