

Saltwater crocodiles find their way home

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Australian scientists have discovered saltwater crocodiles have the ability to return to their home territory across significant distances.

Researchers from the University of Queensland, the Australia Zoo and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have tracked crocodiles swimming between six and 18 miles a day in such efforts.

Professor Craig Franklin of the university's School of Integrative Biology said one relocated crocodile swam around the northern tip of Australia to reach home, covering more than 250 miles in 20 days.

"We often thought crocodiles tired very quickly, but here we show very clearly that they are capable of moving long distances for days on end," Franklin said.

The results come from the first satellite tracking study of wild crocodiles undertaken by a collaboration led by Franklin, Mark Read of the park and wildlife service and late wildlife expert Steve Irwin.

The crocodiles were tracked using a specially-designed transmitter attached to the back of their heads that collected the data and relayed it via satellite to the scientists.

The study is to be reported in the online journal PLoS One.

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