

Croc horror: Love lost after Aussie teen reptile stunt

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Saltwater crocodiles are common in northern Australia, where numbers have increased since the introduction of protection laws in 1971

A British backpacker who inspired a drunk Australian teenager to swim in crocodile-infested waters, narrowly avoiding death, said Tuesday she was not impressed by the fraught romantic gesture.

In a bid to woo Sophie Paterson, Lee de Paauw jumped into Johnstone

River at Innisfail in Queensland state early Sunday morning.

Within moments of hitting the water, a [saltwater crocodile](#) latched onto his arm.

De Paauw, 18, was lucky to escape with only two [broken bones](#) and stitches after the reptile released its grip when he landed punches on its head.

He said the stunt was to impress "that beautiful backpacker".

"She's really good looking and (had) been kind to me the night before," he said.

But Paterson, 24, told Channel Seven television the lovestruck youngster had failed to win her over.

"I would have to be quite twisted to be impressed by that," she said.

"I think risking your life—there is nothing funny about that. In all honesty it was a really horrific experience."

Despite the brazen act, Paterson said she would visit de Paauw if work demands allowed, but she added that there were no plans for the two to date, telling reporters he was "too young for me".

Australia is home to freshwater and saltwater [crocodiles](#) with the more feared "salties" growing up to seven metres long.

Saltwater crocodiles are common in the country's north where numbers have increased since the introduction of protection laws in 1971. They kill an average of two people each year in Australia.

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