

Media release

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WWF welcomes investigation into marine wildlife deaths

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Queensland Environment Minister Kate Jones' announcement of a scientific panel to investigate deaths of threatened marine species near Gladstone is a welcome move, WWF said today. Nearly 30 green turtles, two dugongs and three dolphins have washed up in the area over the past few months.

Equally disturbing, two rare snubfin dolphins - currently the subject of a threatened species nomination under the EPBC Act - were found dead near Townsville last month. They'd been tied to a mangrove and weighted down with concrete blocks.

"In the past these incidents have usually gone unresolved, from an official perspective, so it is good to see the Minister and the department taking some positive steps towards resolving them," said WWF's Manager for Tropical Marine Species, Lydia Gibson.

"Local communities around Gladstone and Townsville have done some great work as the eyes and ears on the ground telling us what they are seeing in their marine environment, and together we'll be watching the progress of this investigation closely.

"It is also important that any such taskforce remain independent of the government," Ms Gibson said.

WWF is urging the Queensland Government to deliver a state-wide action plan to safeguard marine wildlife.

WWF is asking the government consider:

- Management actions resulting in fewer nets in the water for shorter periods of time - especially large mesh nets;
- Partnerships with indigenous communities to effectively manage and protect marine wildlife into the future;
- Creation and extension of safe havens for turtles, dugongs, and dolphins.

More information

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