

QLD:Concerns for sea turtles after floods

BRISBANE, March 4 AAP - There are grave concerns for the welfare of sea turtles living off the coast of southeast Queensland as pollution from the Brisbane floods washes out into the ocean.

Marine biologist Kathy Townsend is heading a "Turtles in Trouble" research project with the Earthwatch Institute and the University of Queensland.

Sea turtles frequently die after choking on plastic bags and rubbish, Dr Townsend said.

She said the pollution and rubbish that washed down the Brisbane River and out to sea during the January floods would cause problems for sea turtles in coming months.

"The additional amount of flood debris that has been washed into Moreton Bay and surrounds ... means the turtles are high-risk," Dr Townsend told AAP.

"The turtles are under a lot of pressure as it is - such as boat strike, encroachment on nesting beaches, feral animals eating their eggs.

"This is just adding another straw to the camel's back, so to speak."

Dr Townsend urged people to lend a hand picking up rubbish along waterways on Clean up Australia Day this Sunday.

"Take the opportunity to go out there, clean up around water shore areas," she said.

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