

YELLOW-BELLIED SEA SNAKES

Warden Kevin Morrison reports that there have been a number of Yellow-bellied Sea Snakes found on the beach at East Busselton and Wonnerup Inlet.

It would appear that these were washed ashore during storms in late August although many were found still alive in the first week in September. Warden Morrison and Cadet Warden Ray Smith inspected a three mile section of beach north-east from the mouth of Wonnerup Inlet and collected 8 Yellow-bellied Sea Snakes, several of which were alive.



Cadet Warden Ray Smith with the eight sea snakes found at East Busselton.

Warden Morrison comments that although it is not uncommon for this species of sea snake (which is native to the warmer tropical waters of the Pacific and Indian Oceans) to be found washed up after winter storms on beaches as far south as the Metropolitan area, it is unusual for so many specimens to be found at once in such a small area and as far south as this. Apart from the 8 specimens collected, 6 other specimens were reported found from Bunbury to Wilyabrup.

Sea snakes are particularly venomous but generally will attack only if provoked or handled; on land they are very sluggish and give the appearance of being dead. It is best to treat all sea snakes as alive and dangerous until proven otherwise.