

RED-EARED SLIDERS NEAR BRISBANE



AUTHORITIES have been alarmed to discover that an American turtle, the Red-eared Slider, has been discovered in farm dams north of Brisbane. This aggressive killer has the attitude of a mutant ninja turtle and could play havoc with native species if it gets into our waterways. They have the potential to spread into over 80% of Australian waterways, including estuaries and other brackish habitats.

They have strong jaws and a nasty bite and will eat anything including frogs, lizards, snakes and other turtles. Apparently, if a fish

swallows a young Slider, it will bite at the fish's insides until the fish regurgitates the dangerous meal! Queensland's Environmental Protection Authority is attempting to eradicate them, including such extreme measures as filling in and compacting the farm dams concerned.

Red-eared Sliders are classified as one of the world's 100 worst feral invaders and are banned in Australia. It is thought that the colony was started when a collector released illegally traded turtles into the wild.

Did you know...

Quandongs are Cool!

That the leaves of Quandong, *Santalum acuminatum*, will sometimes feel cooler to the touch than those of nearby shrubs? This is because the Quandong will, at certain times, transpire at a higher rate than other shrubs and the additional water vapour evaporating from their leaves makes them feel cooler. This is the case for most 'root hemiparasites' like the Quandong and Sandalwood. In contrast, most Mistletoe always transpire at faster rates than their host and always have cooler leaves.

Next time you see a Quandong or Sandalwood in the bush (or if you can reach Mistletoe) feel the leaves and see if they are cooler than a nearby shrub or tree. Perhaps this possibility of a lower temperature encourages kangaroos to choose Quandong and Sandalwood as daytime rest places? (Thanks to Rosemary Jasper and Grant Woodall for this fascinating snippet.)