



# CMA Draws Line in the Sand in Defence of Turtles

**On Gunbower Island, the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is making a stand – protecting the Murray Darling Basin’s freshwater turtles from fox attack is their mission.**

The North Central CMA, in collaboration with students from the University of Western Sydney (UWS), Turtles Australia and other passionate members of the community, has identified this place as turtle breeding territory so it’s here they are working to understand fox behaviour and ways to curb fox attacks on turtles.

Gunbower Creek and its lagoons are prime habitat for three species of Australian freshwater turtle; the broad-shelled turtle, eastern or common long-necked turtle and the Murray River turtle.

In partnership with public and private land managers, the North Central CMA is coordinating fox control efforts through a monitoring and a baiting program. The project is supported by funding from the Australian Government.

According to North Central CMA Project Manager, Adrian Martins, there are a range of threats to the survival of turtles in the region, but

by far the most serious is that of the foxes – whether attacking female turtles as they lay eggs, or eating the eggs that have been slowly incubating in the warmth of soils adjacent to the creek and lagoons.

“Sandy north-facing banks and nearby lagoons are prime turtle nesting habitat,” he said.

“Unfortunately we’re not the only ones to have worked that out and having acquired a taste for turtles and their eggs, foxes are continually raiding the nurseries.

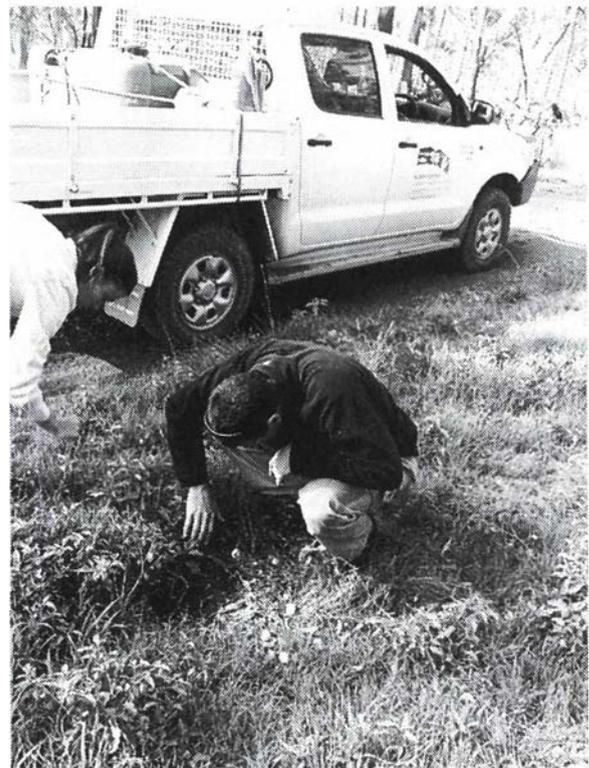
“Foxes are a leading cause of turtle decline in all three species within the region.

“They are unrelenting in their attack, not only digging up nests to feast on the eggs, but also attacking the female turtles as they emerge from waterways to nest.

“We’re determined to do what we can to protect them, including fox baiting, turtle monitoring and weed control.

“Our work includes mapping turtle nests, analysing remote sensor camera imagery from bait stations and working to apply the findings from our turtle monitoring and fox baiting program.

“Partnerships built on direct action and conducting the scientific research is the key; for the turtles’ sake, it’s a fight we’re all up for.”



• North Central CMA Project Manager Adrian Martins inspects a turtle nest raided by foxes.