



# Media Release

Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2009

## CONFIRMATION OF FRESHWATER JELLYFISH IN TASMANIA

NRM North has caught live freshwater jellyfish at Lake Trevallyn which officially confirms the existence of the species in Tasmania.

The Scientific and Technical Officer for NRM North's Tamar Estuary and Esk River (TEER) program, Michael Attard, found several of the small jellyfish called *Craspedacusta sowerbyi* during routine water testing at Lake Trevallyn last week.

While there have been some reported sightings of the jellyfish in Tasmania, this is the first official record.

It is believed the species originated in China and was carried to Tasmania as tiny larvae on birds' feet.

They are not harmful to humans.

Mr Attard said he was surprised and excited to find a number of the freshwater jellyfish in the lake as he had never heard of their existence before.

"I came across around 30 of them near Blackstone Heights during routine water monitoring.

"They're around the size of a ten cent coin and were quite hard to catch but eventually I managed to get a few in a water testing bottle to take to the experts." Mr Attard said.

Mr Attard contacted one of the world's leading jellyfish experts, Dr Lisa-ann Gershwin, who is the natural science curator at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston.

Dr Gershwin said it was an extremely important discovery.

"While we have had reports of freshwater jellyfish in Tasmania, this is the first time we've seen live specimens.

"*Craspedacusta sowerbyi* has a voracious appetite for mosquito larvae and researchers are currently studying whether it can be used as a natural bio-control, particularly in regions where mosquitoes carry dangerous pathogens such as Malaria, Dengue Fever and Ross River Fever.

"The specimens found by NRM North will be available for researchers for many years to come and we hope to display them at the museum at Inveresk very soon." Dr Gershwin said.

A scientific paper will now be published detailing the occurrence of the species at Lake Trevallyn.

Anyone who discovers freshwater jellyfish in other waterways in Tasmania is asked to contact NRM North or the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

**Interview/picture opportunity:**

**Mr Attard and Dr Gershwin will be searching for more freshwater jellyfish at Lake Trevallyn TODAY and will be available for pictures and interviews at 1.30pm at the boat ramp.**

Ends

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For more information contact:

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