January 27, 2015

Marine litter major threat to sea creatures great and small

While summer time gives us a chance to get outdoors and on the water, it also sadly means an increase in the volume of litter on our public beaches and local parks.

Due to recent incidents Gladstone Regional Council is again issuing a plea to onshore anglers and boaties to ‘cast your line, not your waste’ in a campaign to put a stop to marine litter.

Council’s Environment portfolio spokesperson Councillor Col Chapman said several turtles were brought to the Quoin Island Turtle Rehabilitation Centre recently caught up in fishing line.

"It's so important for fishing enthusiasts to dispose of fishing line correctly to avoid situations like these where turtles are caught in or have ingested line," Cr Chapman said.

"The volunteers do a remarkable job at the rehabilitation centre but they shouldn't have to be caring for turtles harmed through the lazy action of others.

"If a turtle ingests a foreign object such as finishing line or plastic, which cannot be removed safely, it will twist its intestines. Fishing line, plastic bait bags, food packaging and drink containers pose a serious threat to marine life, wildlife and the environment if dropped on land or at sea."

Cr Chapman said litter was also a major problem for our region’s birdlife and encouraged boaties to make use of the 37 TAngler Bins, specially designed and installed across the region for fishing line disposal, or take rubbish home and dispose of it correctly.

"Council continues to collect data on the use of these TAngler bins versus regular public bins, so while we appreciate many locals emptying these bins when full, we are urging residents to contact council to have it emptied so we can keep an accurate track of the usage."

"When we leave litter in our environment, even with the intention of collecting it later, all it takes is a gust of wind or one strong wave to sweep these harmful objects into our region's waterways," Cr Chapman added.

"Next time you are enjoying the outdoors, keep our feathered, finned and flippered friends in mind and dispose of your litter carefully."

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The plea to put a stop to marine litter is part of Council’s Illegal Dumping and Litter Prevention Strategy, jointly funded by Council and Gladstone Ports Corporation.

If you do find an entangled or hooked turtle or any injured wildlife, please contact the 1300 ANIMAL number and they will contact either of the two rehabilitation facilities in Gladstone - GAWB or QITRC.

In the interest of public safety, residents are also urged not to attempt to remove hooks from animals.

Additional information on TAngler Bin locations can be found on the Gladstone Regional Council website www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/parks-and-gardens

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