Chill will move cruising croc

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HERVEY Bay and Tin Can Bay residents should not be too surprised a crocodile had taken up residence in their region, an expert says.

University of Queensland scientist Craig Franklin said yesterday that the area was well within the known croc habitat, but that the 4m reptile was unlikely to stay in the region once temperatures started to cool.

“It's a visitor and with a bit of luck will make its way back north. There's little likelihood of it breeding,” he said.

Professor Franklin said there was no evidence crocs were extending their range, nor were they increasing their numbers in southern waters, although it could be theorised they would move south as the climate warmed.

“It might seem like there's more around but like with sharks, the more the human population grows, the more we are encroaching on their territory so the likelihood of encounters will increase,” Professor Franklin said.

Rangers were still searching for the crocodile late yesterday.

A man checking a crab pot was taken by a crocodile near Cooktown in October last year and a boy who followed a puppy into a mangrove swamp in the Daintree north of Cairns was snatched last month.