Homesick crocs hightail it home

THREE crocodiles relocated from their homes in far north Queensland have been tracked swimming between 10km and 30km a day back to their capture sites.

One of the crocodiles swam around the northern tip of Australia to reach home, covering more than 400km in 20 days, the study by the University of Queensland (UQ), Australia Zoo and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) found.

Professor Craig Franklin, from UQ’s School of Integrative Biology, said the data showed that estuarine crocodiles were “oceanic animals” which could move phenomenal distances over a prolonged period of time.

“We often thought crocodiles tired very quickly, but here we show very clearly that they are capable of moving long distances for days on end,” Prof Franklin said.

The results are part of a satellite tracking study of wild crocodiles that was led by Dr Mark Read (QPWS), Professor Franklin and the late Steve Irwin.

All three monitored crocodiles were moved by helicopter between 52km and 130km away, but still found their way back to their capture sites.