

## Deferred Dam Could Be Saving Grace for Endangered Wildlife

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John Cann's Wild Guide to Freshwater Turtles helps explain why some turtles are vulnerable to Federal Greens leader Bob Brown says the Queensland Government's decision to delay the construction of the Traveston dam for up to four years means the project is dead. And while many families living in the area can now breathe a sigh of relief, it is the conservationists that are the true victors. The Traveston Crossing Dam site, near Gympie in Queensland, has been the subject of continued opposition from conservationists and the surrounding community over fears the dam's construction would endanger several species of wildlife, such as the Australian Lungfish, the Mary River Cod and the Mary River Turtle. Premier Anna Bligh has deferred approval of the dam's construction until further environmental research can secure a sustainable solution for the survival of these threatened species. The Mary River Turtle is an already endangered species that can only be found between the salt restriction wall and the Kenilworth region of the Mary River, and in Tinana Creek in eastern coastal Queensland. John Cann, author of [A Wild Australia Guide: Freshwater Turtles](#) published this month by enthusiastic environmentalist [Steve Parish](#), agrees the future looks grim for the Mary River Turtle if the construction of the Traveston Dam is ever to go ahead.

"The Mary River Turtle has a highly specialised biology that is really unlikely to cope with any dramatic changes to the river. In fact, what is not often recognised by Australians is that there are many more species under threat in Australia as they compete with our ever-expanding human population for water supplies," Cann, a member and advisor to the Tortoise and Turtle Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, admits. Lack of water resources is not the only contributor the decline of freshwater turtles, large numbers are also accidentally caught and drowned in netting made for fish and yabbies and baby turtles regularly fall prey to feral predators. Not only does Cann's Wild Australia Guide explore the threats and conservation status for several of Australia's freshwater species, it raises public awareness for their protection and offers guidance for those caring for turtles as pets. Steve Parish's intimate wildlife photography complements Cann's examination of 37 different species of Australian turtles.

"Research into these intriguing animals has progressed a great deal in the last fifteen years, but their survival ultimately rests on raised public awareness of their habitat and sustainable essentials. The hope is that the book will help Australian people to understand, support and look after this innocuous group of creatures, whether one becomes the family pet, the backyard guest or the star of the local creek," said Cann.