



Killer box jellyfish at Nightcliff jetty

By DANIEL BOURCHIER
and ALISON BEVEGE

DEADLY box jellyfish are in plague proportions at a popular Darwin beach, alarming experts and prompting new warnings for beachgoers.

NEWSBREAKER Corinn Stickland, 32, captured stunning photos of the box jellyfish at Nightcliff jetty yesterday. She said there were more than 200 of the venomous marine creatures in an area covering a few metres – just off the shore.

Meanwhile, families with young children were seen swimming and wading just a few hundred metres away.

Jellyfish expert Professor Bart Currie, from the Menzies School of Health Research

and Royal Darwin Hospital, was alarmed by the images.

He said the box jellyfish pictured “had enough venom to kill a whole football team”.

“Keep your children out of the water,” he said.

“The really dangerous times are days like yesterday when they have come in from rough weather and are feeding.

“From these pics, we can see they are in large numbers.

“They really are dramatic pictures – to see so many jellyfish swimming around the jetty.”

Professor Currie said *chironex fleckeri*, more commonly known as box jellyfish, usually arrive in swarms during the wet season. The deadly crea-

tures move out to sea during storms to project themselves.

When the weather clears, they return to shallow waters to feed.

Dr Currie said the most important message is safety and believes the warning comes as a timely reminder of the dangers of jellyfish.

Ms Stickland said she spotted the jellyfish at Nightcliff jetty at 8.30am yesterday.

“I was out having an Australia Day fish,” she said. “There were about 200 of them – I have never seen that many.”

Three people have been hospitalised in the past two weeks after being stung by jellyfish. The last 11 deaths caused by box jellyfish, in the NT, were all children.



BEWARE: Deadly box jellyfish just off Nightcliff beach