

Waterwatch Safety Guidelines and Recommendations (adapted for eDNA sampling).

Safety Guidelines & Recommendations:

For your own safety, when participating in the eDNA citizen science program, please follow these simple safety recommendations:

- Take care of yourself and do not take unnecessary risks.
- Don't go to your sites alone. Work in groups of two or more.
- Avoid high risk weather conditions, such as flooding and extreme fire danger days.
- Provide your destination and activity details to another person prior to going out in the field.
- Carry a mobile phone with you.
- Bring a map of the area you are going to.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for fieldwork (sturdy shoes and long pants).
- Dress according to the weather conditions. Take extra clothing for changes in the weather.
- During daylight hours protect yourself from the sun (hat, long-sleeve shirt and sunscreen)
- Carry water with you.
- To avoid insect bite use insect repellent and/or covered clothing.
- Beware of snakes in long grass and near waterways. Should a snake bite occur seek medical attention immediately.
- If an incident occurs whilst participating in the eDNA citizen science program, please report this to xx by phoning xx. Emergencies should be immediately reported to the authorities (police, fire, ambulance etc.) on 000.

Choose safe sites:

Do not be content to select sites from a map. Visit the site area prior to sampling to ensure you are well prepared, and your site is safe to access and sample. Should you have any concerns, contact xx for safety advice.

Avoid sites where there are dogs, livestock, snakes, bees, leeches, prickly plants and insects. Also ensure sites are unobstructed – clear of long grass and vegetation.

Choose sites that have safe and easy access to the waters edge and avoid sites that have steep, slippery or unstable banks, or are adjacent to deep, swiftly flowing water.

Reference and map out trip before undertaking and seek advice on local road conditions (dirt road, gravel road, sealed road) and any potential hazards from landowners or locals and weather forecasts prior to driving to sites.

Be aware of your surroundings and mindful of other people in the area including cyclists, pedestrians, and dog walkers.

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Wear appropriate clothing:

If it is cold and could rain, wear warm clothing, a raincoat and sturdy waterproof shoes.

If it is sunny, wear a hat, sunglasses, long sleeved shirts and trousers and apply sunscreen.

If the site is heavily vegetated, wear long pants, gaiters, strong boots and a long-sleeved shirt to avoid scratches and snakebites.

Wear appropriate footwear and clothing that is bright so that you can be easily seen.

If entering shallow waters, make sure you wear gumboots with a good grip and don't enter water above the knee.

Bring extra clothes and a towel in case someone slips in and gets wet.

Arriving at site:

Park vehicles in locations that will minimise the risk, as far as practicable, of injury due to slips, trips or falls.

Carefully carry equipment up and down steps and staircases.

Seek cover from hail, storm, extreme sun exposure, and reschedule sampling in extreme weather conditions.

Establish safety of pedestrian or road bridges before leaning on railings.

Entering water:

Where possible ensure all sampling is done from the water's edge.

Where sampling requires you to enter the water, only enter water that is less than knee deep. Test water depth using your sampling pole, or stick, before stepping in.

Do not wear waders unless you have conducted 'wader training'. Gumboots should be sufficient.

Avoid contact with polluted water:

Carry drinking water with you. Do not drink water from the water source you are sampling as it may be polluted.

Bring hand washing supplies and make sure you use them after monitoring. This is especially important if the field trip involves a picnic lunch, barbeque or snack.