



Nile Crocodile

Common name: Nile Crocodile

Latin name: *Crocodylus niloticus*

Local name: التمساح - الدودو



ECOLOGY

Type:

Wild

Role in Ecosystem:

Crocodiles are apex predators in their habitats. They regulate the populations of other animals and therefore prevent them from degrading the ecosystem. Crocodiles also create habitats for other animals by burrowing and nest building. During the dry season, the presence of crocodiles deters land animals from depleting limited water supplies.

HABITAT

The Nile crocodile inhabits a wide range of aquatic habitats, including large freshwater lakes, rivers and swamps. They have been known to enter the sea in some areas.

It is widespread in sub-saharan Africa, the Nile basin and Madagascar.



Food

Carnivore

Crocodiles are ambush hunters; they lie in wait under water and attack whatever prey animal wanders nearby. Their main diet is fish, but also land animals, and even fast and nimble animals can't escape them. They will also often scavenge from carcasses, and might store their food for later.

Since they are ectothermic animals, they can go for long periods of time without eating.



Movement and Communication

Communication:

Crocodiles communicate using a number of sounds and hisses. The hatchlings can reportedly vocalize even before hatching.

Movement:

Crocodiles are powerful swimmers, taking advantage of their torpedo-shaped bodies and propelled by their tails. They can also jump out of the water and gallop on land to catch prey. They can reach speeds of 30 - 35 km/h swimming, making it one of the fastest crocodile species.



Social Habits

Solitary

Nile crocodiles are solitary, but may share feeding and basking spots with several other individuals. They were observed working together to hunt prey, which is common in other crocodile and alligator species. When present in groups, there is a strict hierarchy according to size and age.

Male crocodiles are territorial and defend their territories both in water and on land.



Reproduction

Oviparous

Nile crocodiles are seasonal breeders, which occurs in the dry season. The female Nile crocodile reaches sexual maturity at roughly 2 m, approximately 10 years of age, while the male is around 2.5 m length at about 7 years of age.

It is worth noting that the Nile crocodile is one of the only reptilian species where both the male and female contribute to parental care. The females will nest when the rainy season begins, building their nests on riverbanks on dry streams. She will lay around 25 to 100 eggs, cover them with sand, and either parent may guard until they hatch in about 3 months.

The parents may help with the hatching process by rolling the eggs between their tongue and palate and create cracks in the shell. The parents will protect the juveniles for several weeks to months. If threatened, the female will pick up her offspring in her mouth to protect them.

Attributes

Appearance:

The Nile crocodile is a large, lizard-shaped reptile with four short legs and a long muscular tail. The skin is rough and scaled. Juvenile Nile crocodiles are dark olive to brown with darker crossbands on their tail and body. Adults are uniformly dark with darker crossbands on tail.

Length:

4 - 4.5 metres (13.1 - 14.7 feet)

Weight:

Around 410 kg (900 lb)

Life Span:

45 years in the wild, may live up to 80 years in captivity

INTRODUCTION

The Nile crocodile is a large reptile found in Africa across a wide geographical area, in rivers, freshwater lakes and other bodies of water. It is Africa's largest crocodilian.

Crocodiles have existed for many millions of years, surviving the dinosaur extinction. Crocodile fossils dating millions of years have been found in the Sudanese desert.

In Sudan, it is found on the banks of the river Nile and has terrorized the local populations for generations.

It is hunted for its meat and skin, which is a highly prized material used in local crafts.

LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

Human interaction

Crocodiles are a known menace to swimmers and fishermen on the river Nile and its banks. This danger increases in the seasonal floods.

Humans hunt crocodiles as trophies, and for their meat and skin, which is used in many local hand crafts.

Cultural value

The crocodile is used as a symbol of strength, masculinity or slyness and hidden intentions.

It frequently appears in Sudanese poetry to praise distinguished men. It is also mentioned in laments of children or adults who disappeared in the River.

The crocodile also appears in a legend involving Yousuf Ab-Shara, a 16th-century Sheikh, where after consuming a servant of his maseed, the crocodile was forced to regurgitate the living man and then turned into a slab of stone with a strike of the Sheikh's staff.

Cultural expression

Shileel weno? Akalo al dodo

Shileel wen rah? Akalo al tomsah

A game that children play, where one child will carry a bone while saying *Shileel weno?* And the other children reply *Akalo aldodo* (it was eaten by a crocodile). The child will then hide the bone. The other participants search for it and the one who finds it can lead the next round and hide .the bone

التمساح إن طروهو في بحرو يطلع

(Lit.: Speak of the crocodile and he'll come out of the river)

"A proverb similar to "Speak of the devil

كل بحر ليهو تمساح

(Lit.: Each river has its crocodile)

.A proverb meaning that every field has its experts

THREATS

Nile crocodiles are listed as least concern. However, they are legally protected in many countries due to habitat destruction, pollution and hunting by humans.

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