

Animals of the World: Reptiles



THE CROCODILE

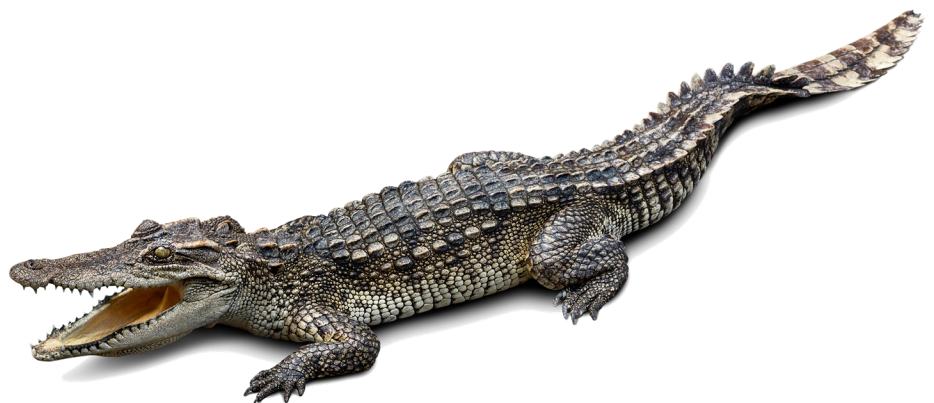
Crocodiles are the largest animals of the reptilian species. It has a semi-aquatic life, which means that they can spend time in the water and on land. Their appearance is intimidating, and they have a reputation for being violent and ruthless. Even hippos do not dare to enter the water with them.

There are a total of twenty-three species of crocodiles that live in tropical areas of Australia, Asia, Africa, and America. Some people believe that this animal inhabited the Earth at the time of the dinosaurs because it is estimated that they were on the planet two hundred million years ago.

They are characterized by their scaly, hard, and dry skin that serves as armor. They also have four legs and a long muscular tail that allows them to move underwater more agilely.

The average size of these reptiles is 5 meters long, with a weight of approximately 250 kilograms. The largest species is considered to be the marine crocodile, which can be up to 7 meters long, although the Andean gharial could measure the same. Keep in mind that its size varies according to the species, the environment, and the diet.

Crocodiles are carnivorous animals, whose food varies throughout their lives. When young, they usually eat small animals such as fish, frogs, and turtles, among others. When older, they eat mammals that even larger than them. They are very stealthy hunters; they wait patiently for their prey





in open fields or on the banks of rivers and lakes, and then launch their devastating attack.

Crocodiles capture and eat their prey with their long jaws, which have a row of numerous sharp teeth. The strength of its bite is even more powerful than that of a lion or a tiger.

Crocodiles are one of the most unpredictable reptiles in the animal kingdom; they are a reptile that can move very slowly underwater and suddenly move quickly to catch prey. They also have great leg strength, so they can run on land when needed.

Although crocodiles look like silent animals, the truth is that their vocal tract allows them to generate more than 20 sounds to communicate with the same species. They even make distress and warning sounds when they feel threatened.

Crocodiles can live from 50 to 80 years and reach maturity in 5 to 15 years, although this varies according to the species and living conditions. Females start laying eggs when they reach sexual maturity, which depends on their age and size. This means that they are oviparous animals, that is to say, that their young are born through the deposit of eggs.



Females can lay 10 to 40 eggs. They lay their eggs in a nest made with leaves and soil. They are very territorial and try to protect their nest from all predators, which they would not hesitate to attack.

At birth, the young are protected by their mothers; but they quickly disperse and become independent. Many of the young do not reach adulthood because of the large number of predators and changes in the temperature of the waters.



Name _____

Date _____



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Answer the questions.



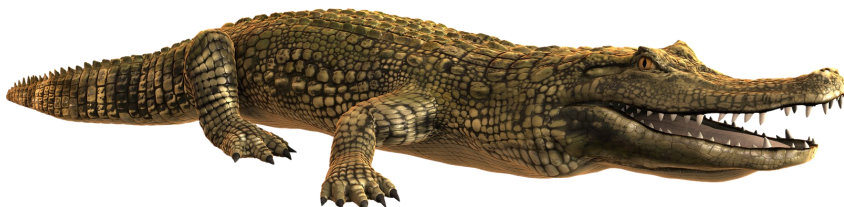
1. From research or knowledge, name at least three species of reptile.

2. Why are crocodiles considered semi-aquatic animals?

3. Why do crocodiles have the reputation of being violent and that larger animals like hippos are even afraid of them?

4. In what areas of the world are crocodiles found?

5. Do you think that the skin of crocodiles helps them defend themselves against other animals? Explain your answer.



Name_____

Date_____



6. How does what the crocodile eats vary?

7. From what the text, what does the word stealthy mean, and how are crocodiles stealthy?

8. Describe how crocodiles hunt.

9. From what the text says and your own knowledge, what does territorial mean?

10. Why do so many young crocodiles never become adults?

