

Ndumu Game Reserve,
P.O. Ndumu,
Zululand. SOUTH AFRICA.
JULY, 1972.

I.U.C.N. CROCODILE SPECIALIST GROUP: NEWSLETTER NO. 5

1. SOUTH AMERICA.

Prof. Fred Medem has been travelling through Guyana, Surinam, French Guyana, Trinidad, Tobago and Venezuela on the northern leg of his survey of the South American crocodilian populations.

In a letter to Dr. Wayne King he reported learning a great deal about the distribution and abundance of various species and, in addition, he has caused a great deal of newspaper coverage to be spent on the need for crocodilian conservation.

2. Rene Honegger reports hearing about a tannery which is under construction, or already built in or near Asuncion, Paraguay, in collaboration with Hoechst Chemical Industries, West Germany. Hoechst apparently sent an adviser, Mr. Karlheinz Fuchs to initiate the project.

Annual production expected: 1,200,000 lizards
300,000 crocodiles
140,000 snakes
over 1,000,000 frogs

Has anyone more facts about this?

3. Morelets Crocodile.

Doctors Wayne King and Howard Campbell are undertaking a joint effort to evaluate the status of the Morelets and American crocodiles through Mexico, Guatemala and British Honduras. Sponsored by the New York Zoological Society, they will be particularly interested in determining the relative status of these two species throughout this area and in examining their ecological and morphological relationships. Dr. Campbell will be spending the summer, 1972, attempting to locate populations in the field to obtain data on their ecological requirements and status.

Morphological data from all available museum specimens will be analysed by Dr. King, supplemented by field measurements, to determine the systematic status of the two species and evaluate the possibility of a genetic continuity, or gene exchange between the various populations.

N.B. After September 1st, 1972, Dr. Campbell's address will be : Department of Biology, Trenton State College, Trenton, New Jersey, 08625, U.S.A.

4. Breeding of Morelet's Crocodile.

Translated letter from Dr. Alvarez del Toro from Tuxtla Gutierrez, dated June 8, 1972, addressed to Dr. Budowski;

"I am pleased to inform you that we have already three females of Crocodylus moreletii nesting and there will probably be a fourth one this year. These are at the Experimental Centre we have at the zoo of this town. I cannot say how many eggs have been laid as I do not wish to disturb the females. The eggs will be hatched in about two and a half months time."

5. U.S.A.

Dr. Wayne King reports that a fair number of West African Dwarf Crocodiles have been seized recently, for being imported into the U.S.A. without proper papers. These animals were turned over to the New York Zoological Society and they started dying one after another. Autopsies on the dead animals, and X-rays of the live ones revealed that each was caught on a large fish hook which remains imbedded deep in their stomach. It seems that for every ten imported under these conditions, 9 will eventually die.

6. AFRICA.

The Republic of Zaire (formerly Congo) has stopped all crocodilian hunting until such time as a sustained yield harvest plan is developed and implemented. The French tanners involved are most unhappy and are endeavouring to put a lot of economic pressure on the agriculture ministers responsible for the moratorium.

7. Ndumu Crocodile Bank - Zululand.

a) A further 72 crocodiles were released and distributed into Lake St. Lucia on 23/5/1972.

b) Three problem crocodiles were captured at Sordwana Bay, a tourist resort about 180Km. from Ndumu. These crocodiles ventured down to the coast after heavy floods and were a danger to tourists. They were brought back for display and study purposes.

- c) Adult Nile Crocodiles are being captured for breeding experiments in a newly completed enclosure and are settling down well to captive conditions.
- d) Two film units were recently assisted in making films for education and publicity purposes. One to be distributed to schools, the other for general publicity.
- e) The Natal Parks Board this year exhibited crocodiles as the main conservation theme at the Eshowe Agricultural show and we took the opportunity of exposing the public to the need for conservation of this species. The exhibit won a special award.

8. Uganda: Murchison Falls National Park.

Dr. Hugh Cott has completed his recent survey on breeding biology and status of crocodiles below Murchison Falls. Precise hatching dates were obtained for some nests, and in all, a total of 152 nests were examined. This is a drop in numbers from 176 nests in 1969 and 181 in 1968. Extensive data was obtained on the Breeding Season, Nesting Population, Distribution of Nests, Clutch sizes, Nest Histories, Predatory Egg-eaters and Nests Spoiled by Moisture.

Hatching success was noted from 11 nests and some of the predators, such as Goliath Heron, Saddlebill Stork, Great White Egret, Marabou, Black Kite and Fish Eagle noted hunting hatchlings.

Territorial and courtship displays were studied, maternal care at the nest and the existence of nurseries for hatchlings was established and behaviour of parents on guard of such nurseries was documented.

The report contains recommendations for future management, in particular dealing with evident poaching, disturbance to nesting crocodiles by launch tours and suggests establishing a rearing and re-stocking station as well as a Field Unit who would be responsible for crocodile management within the Park.

NEW BOOKS, JOURNALS AND PAPERS.

- 9. Population Distribution of Alligators with Special Reference to the Louisiana coastal Marsh Zones.

by Ted Joanen and Larry McNease (Louisiana Wild-life and Fisheries Commission) Presented at Symposium of the American Alligator Council held at Lake Charles, Louisiana. May, 1972.

10. Evolutionary and Systematic significance of Crocodylian Habits.
by Allen E. Greer (1970) Nature. London.
227 (5257) 523 - 524.
11. Rückkehr des Nilkrokodils, *Crocodylus niloticus* in altes Verbreitungsgebiet.
by Prof. Dr. H.C. Heinrich Dathe
Printed in Salamandra, 7 - 3/4 - 94 - 158 (1971)
(With construction of the Assuan dam, the Nile Crocodile has recovered part of its former distribution area along the Nile river and is now regularly found near Assuan.)
12. Crocodiles - their Natural History, Folklore and Conservation.
by C.A.W. Guggisberg (1972)
1 - 195, illustrations. Published by David and Charles: Newton Abbot.

Ed. note: Written mainly in popular style, this little book is good propaganda for crocodiles and their conservation.

13. Jamaica's Endangered Species.
by Russell A. Mittermeier.
Oryx - vol. XI no.4. January, 1972. p. 258-262.

On page 262 the following appears on Crocodylus acutus American Crocodile but locally called Alligator

The only endangered Jamaican reptile that is not endemic. Described as surviving in moderate numbers at Great Salt Pond, a private estate where shooting is prohibited. At Portland Point alligators are heavily hunted for sport by well-to-do sportsmen. Since the beginning of 1971, the animal has been totally protected in Jamaica but is still usually killed on sight. Until recently, there were reports of fourteen to fifteen foot individuals in Great Salt Pond. These now appear to have been wiped out, but some still occur in the Black River and a few other isolated areas. Dr. Lewis (Director Jamaica Institute) does not believe it is presently threatened in Jamaica, but it could very well be in the near future and must be carefully watched. A commercial enterprise called Jungle Safari reportedly has about 2000 crocodiles which are used for both show and breeding enterprises, on the north side of Jamaica, on the main road between Ocho Rios and Montego Bay.

- 14) The Morelet's Crocodile. by James Powell.
Animal Kingdom. Vol. LXXV no. 1 February, 1972. p. 21-26, illustrated.

Editor's Note: This account by James Powell is an up to date summary detailing almost everything known about the species.

- 15) The Temperature and Water Relations of Reptiles.
by J.L. Cloudsley-Thompson (1970).

Merrow Publ. Co. Ltd. 276 Hempstead Rd. Watford, WD1,
31Z Hertfordshire. England. at £2.50 (8dollars).

166 pages, 15 line illustrations, 4 plates.
(Contains some interesting data on crocodiles.)

16. Zoo Breeding.

According to the International Zoo News; no. 105,
(1972) the Amsterdam Zoo successfully bred Caiman sclerops
in 1971.

Nine hatched between 4-16th November, 1971, of eggs
laid on August 8th, 1971.

With best wishes,

Tony Pooley