

POOLEY
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Florida State Museum

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Ndumu Game Reserve,
P.O. Ndumu,
Zululand.
South Africa.
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I.U.C.N. CROCODILE S.S.C. GROUP : NEWSLETTER NO. 3.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums.

At the Crocodile Specialist Group meeting in March, Dr. Wayne King, a member of the AAZPA conservation committee, was asked to approach his committee in an attempt to endorse proper exhibition and husbandry of crocodiles, and to promote captive breeding of endangered species.

At its annual meeting held in Salt Lake City, 19 - 23 September, 1971, the AAZPA passed the following resolution:-

1. Exhibit or maintain only the ~~x~~ number of species or subspecies of crocodylians whose behavioural, ecological and nutritional requirements can be properly satisfied in the zoo facility or space available.
2. Exercise equal restraint in maintaining or exhibiting only the number of individuals of any crocodylian species that can be properly housed and bred in the facility or space available.
3. Make every effort to initiate, improve and sustain a breeding program for the crocodylians in their collections.
4. Co-operate with other AAZPA members and other animal propagation and conservation organisations, in establishing breeding programmes for crocodylians through exchange of non-breeding or unmated specimens, and through the free exchange of information and records on captive crocodylians and their husbandry.
5. Discourage commercial dealers and collectors from regularly holding in stock excessive numbers of crocodylians.

Dr. Wayne King and Mr. Steve Dobbs, Director of the Atlanta Zoological Park, are sending out questionnaires to all AAZPA members in order to determine what species they have, the sexes represented and descriptions of the exhibit and holding enclosures.

Once this information is to hand, they will set up a programme for exchanging specimens to pair unmated animals, or to procure specimens for zoos which have proper facilities for breeding.

They already have offers from member zoos to co-operate in this programme, and from a few zoos to act as North American centres for breeding critically endangered species.

Pennsylvania.

Dr. Jack McCoy of Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, informs me that this state has passed a law prohibiting sale of any article made from the skin of an endangered species, including all crocodilians.

Louisiana.

1. Dr. Bob Chabreck is continuing his studies on artificial incubation of alligator eggs. During the 1971 nesting season he tested the effects of transporting eggs on hatchability. He also compared the hatching rates of eggs collected at different intervals during the incubation period and of eggs transported upright and in an inverted position.

2. Ted Joanen and Larry McNease, of the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana, have attached radio transmitters to 12 large male alligators, and plan to follow their movements for a year.

Everglades Crocodile Research.

Writing in 'The Anhinga' (November 1971 edition) John C. Ogden details research that has been carried out on the small, remnant population of crocodiles in southern Florida. During 1970 five nests were found in eastern Florida Bay and eleven nests were located in 1971. Interesting data was collected on predation, hatching success, human disturbance to nesting crocodiles, and data on nest temperatures and local rainfall.

Editor's note: For a more detailed account write to Everglades Natural History Association, P.O. Box 279 Homestead, Florida. 33030, requesting Anhinga, November 1971.

American Alligator Council.

At its Spring 1971 meeting, the AAC established a Population Status Committee. Dr. Bob Chabreck was appointed Chairman and working through state and federal agencies, has set up survey lines in each of the states with alligator populations. Present plans are to check the survey lines each year with hopes of determining population trends.

Mexico and Morelet's Crocodile.

James Powell Jr. reports that he recently talked with Dr. Howard W. Campbell, Florida University, who had just returned from a survey of Crocodylus moreletii in Veracruz state (Mexico), particularly in the Papaloapan Valley region. Morelet's crocodile is apparently making something of a come-back there, presumably owing in part at least to the new protective legislation, such as the

Mason Act, in the United States.

Dr. Campbell counted seven adult specimens in the Papaloapan River while there, and his general impression from talking with local hunters was that it is now very dangerous to try and dispose of poached skins.

Crocodiles for sale.

Rene Honegger received information from Prof. Dr. Bernhard Grzimek of Frankfurt informing him that a dealer, Midwest Reptile and Animal Sales Inc., P.O. Box 6175, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46806, were offering eleven different species or subspecies of crocodilians.

Editor's note: An investigation is needed here, and more information please!

West Germany.

A dealer, 'Zoo' - Nitsche of Buhl-Baden, West Germany, announces that he has Gavialis gangeticus specimens for sale, and that he will import Crocodylus moreletii.

Editor's note: How, from whom and where?

Peru.

Dr. Kai Chr. Otte, Universidad Nacional Agraria, La Molina, Apartado 456, Lima, Peru, (Dept. Manejo Forestal) is conducting an ecological investigation on Melanosuchus niger in the Manu National Park in Peru. (WWF Grant 579/1969)

Southern Africa.

Swaziland.

A professional hunter, recently shot his 140th crocodile in the Usutu river, near Big Bend, one of the larger towns in this country. This incident was reported in a local newspaper and raised much protest from residents who questioned the senseless killing of crocodiles.

Crocodiles are not protected in Swaziland and we are negotiating with their Government to enforce protection to safeguard not only crocodiles within their territory but also because the Usutu river becomes the international boundary between Swaziland/Mozambique/South Africa less than twenty river miles from where this hunter, and others operate. It is also a threat to our restocking programme

as the river constitutes the northern border of the Ndumu Game Reserve. Adult crocodiles are capable of travelling such distances with ease; particularly during flood conditions, when in search of food.

Ndumu Crocodile Bank.

Work on the expansion of this project has progressed well. We have installed a new water supply system consisting of a pump producing 9000 gallons per hour which feeds two supply tanks of 60,000 gallon capacity. The ponds are gravity fed via a trickle system from these tanks.

Two large separate dams for holding adult Crocodylus cataphractus and Osteolemus tetraspis tetraspis animals have been excavated and we have commenced planting vegetation and stocking these with fish to create natural habitats. An additional seven hatchling ponds and three for one and two year old crocodiles have been prepared and we are in the process of finishing a breeding enclosure for C. niloticus.

Nesting.

Owing to high floods this nesting season, we rescued 856 eggs from 18 nests within the Ndumu Game Reserve and from Lake St. Lucia, 723 eggs from 16 nests. Many of the nests were already underwater when visited but eggs were fortunately collected before being spoiled.

Releases.

A further one hundred crocodiles were released in early October from this bank. Sixty of these in Lake St. Lucia and forty within selected marshlands within this reserve.

Articles of Interest.

National Geographic Magazine vol. 140 no. 3, September 1971
Mzima - Kenya's Spring of Life. by Joan and Alan Root
p. 350 - 369. Page 368 depicts an excellent underwater colour photograph of C. niloticus feeding off the carcass of an Mpala antelope.

Fauna (2) The Zoological Magazine, March/April 1971, contains an interesting article 'Crocodilian Nesting Habits and Evolution' by Allen E. Greer, Jr. (Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology).

La Faune vol. 111 no. 32 September, 1971. Le crocodile du Nil, p. 30 - 40 contains some magnificent colour photos of C. niloticus in its natural habitat. (Text in French).

Southeastern Association of Game And Fish Commissions 25th Annual Meeting - Charleston, S. Carolina, U.S.A.

'A new method for capturing Alligators using electricity' by Ted Joanen and W. Guthrie Perry, Jr. (Louisiana Wild Life

and Fisheries Commission, Grand Chenier, Louisiana (p. 1-12)

Zoologica Vol. 56 issue 2 Summer 1971.

'Species Identification of Commercial Crocodylian Skins'
Dr. Wayne King and Peter Brazaitis p. 15 - 70 incl. 41
photographs and diagrams.

AND

Crocodylus intermedius Graves, A Review of the Recent
Literature. p. 71 - 75 by Peter Brazaitis.

Editor's Note: Essential for all crocodile workers
and to all customs and conservation officials who will deal
with crocodylian products during the course of their duties.

Quantas Airways Magazine vol. 37 no. 9 September, 1971
carries an article on 'Commercial Crocodile Farming in
Rhodesia'.

This particular farm, one of three such commercial enterprises
in this country, operates under a permit issued by the
Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management. The
permit holders are permitted to collect 2500 eggs or newly
hatched crocodiles per annum, but five per cent of these
must be returned to natural habitats at a size of 1m.

Editor's note: For more accurate information, see
'Crocodile Farming in Rhodesia' available from Dept. National
Parks and Wildlife Management, P.O. Box 8365 Causeway,
Rhodesia.

Icach (Instituto de Ciencias if Arter de Chiapas) no. 20-21
July 1970 - June 1971.

'Centro de Repoblacion del Cocodrilo de Pantano Crocodylus
moreletii' by Miguel Alvarez del Toro. p. 15 - 17.

WITH BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Tony Pooley
TONY POOLEY.