

**Crocodile Specialist Group Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Sofitel Royal Bay Hotel, Agadir, Morocco**  
(12 May 2026)

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**Zoo Thematic Group**

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**USA**

Gatorland Global

- \$95,976 raised for conservation projects in 2025
- \$50,395 distributed to conservation projects around the globe. This includes:
  - \$12,950 spent rescuing 15 American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*) from euthanasia
  - \$15,500 to Holland Bay Crocodile Sanctuary for the conservation of *Crocodylus acutus*. These funds helped improve daily care for rescued and displaced American crocodiles, strengthen community education and outreach, and build long-term stability
  - \$9140 for Hurricane Melissa relief in Jamaica: Funds provided clean drinking water for the zoo and nearby families, supported animal caretakers across western Jamaica with food and essential supplies, and enabled Hope Zoo in Kingston to take in displaced and injured wildlife
  - \$8000 to Criadero de Cocodrilos Research Center in Cuba for the conservation of *Crocodylus rhombifer*. Funded crocodile rescues, new pools for Cuban crocodile head-start programs, and strengthened breeding, genetic conservation, and long-term survival for *C. rhombifer*
  - \$1500 donation to Winter CrocFest 2025 to support the Gharial Ecology Project
  - \$1000 to Conservation Florida to protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor and the native species that live there
- Sharing conservation content with 2.3M followers across social media platforms
- Other conservation efforts include:
  - Community-based engagement in Suai Loro, Timor-Leste, centered on *Crocodylus porosus*
  - Partnership with Phoenix Herpetological Society to promote conservation and preservation of native and non-native reptiles through education, rehabilitation, rescue, and relocation. This partnership included sending two Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*) to Gatorland. Their arrival represents an important opportunity for learning, education, and collaboration. Additionally, we financially helped Phoenix Herpetological Society to set up pools for incoming Indian Gharial from Madras to help further education and awareness.

CrocFest

CrocFest was held at ZooTampa and Wild Florida Adventure Park (Florida, USA) in 2024 and Crocodile Encounter and St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park (Texas and Florida, USA respectively) in 2025. Taken together, these zoos conservatively donated \$US14,000 hosting the events, paying staff overtime and forfeiting sales at the front gate in favor of CrocFest admissions.

Since May of 2024, CrocFest supported conservation and research programs for *C. rhombifer* and *C. acutus* (Cuba), *C. siamensis* (Laos), *Melanosuchus niger* (French Guiana), *Tomistoma schlegelli* (Borneo), and *Gavialis gangeticus* (India and Nepal). The total amount raised over four events was \$US188,000, of which \$US45,649 (24.3%) was contributed in cash by USA zoos.

In December 2024, CrocFest surpassed \$US1M raised for program support.

**JAMAICA**

Hope Zoo

The American crocodile (*C. acutus*) is the only crocodylian species native to Jamaica and is classified as Endangered and protected by law. Although crocodiles inhabit many of the natural wetlands along the coast, there is a resident population in the urban, human-dominated landscape around Kingston Harbor and downtown Kingston - resulting in numerous human-crocodile conflicts throughout the year.

The Jamaican Government lacks key support, manpower, and expertise when dealing with human-crocodile conflicts and rescue efforts. Accordingly, Hope Zoo plays a vital role in the following:

- Operates as a non-profit and government-permitted rescue & rehabilitation facility. Hope Zoo is the primary facility (1 of only 2) on the island dealing with crocodile rescues & rehabilitation. Its zoo veterinarian is the only vet on the island trained for dealing with crocodiles.
- Responds to government requests to resolve human-crocodile conflicts and associated relocation efforts.

- Hosts two annual crocodile workshops at the zoo in an effort to build up expertise around crocodile rescues and fieldwork on the island. The workshops involve various key government agencies, NGOs, military and police.
- Leads various community outreach activities with schools to help minimize poaching and indiscriminate killings.
- Conducts annual health screening at the Holland Bay Crocodile Sanctuary, from which head-started crocodiles are then released into the wild.
- Assists with various fieldwork (population surveys, tracking studies) in Jamaica as well as providing mentorship to students involved with crocodile research.
- Conducts necropsies of wild crocodiles, and over the last five years has accumulated interesting results for an upcoming publication.

### Hurricane Melissa and Crocodile Issues

On 28 October 2025, Jamaica suffered a direct hit by Hurricane Melissa, a record-breaking Category 5 hurricane and the strongest recorded hurricane to make landfall on the island. Melissa caused heartbreaking catastrophic destruction from which communities and infrastructure will take years to recover.

Although Kingston and other areas on the eastern side of Jamaica were fortunately spared from the worst destruction caused by Melissa, Hope Zoo suffered some minor damage to infrastructure but lost all electricity and had no water for nearly four weeks following. Thankfully, many colleagues and facilities from the US quickly stepped up to provide much need support to the zoo and ongoing recovery efforts - notably, much thanks is given to Gatorland Global, CrocFest, Fort Worth Zoo, Zoo Miami, and Greater Good Charities.

On the western side of the island where both communities and mangrove wetlands got completely destroyed, numerous large crocodiles were displaced in the weeks following Melissa, ending up in local communities and agriculture areas. Support funds from U.S. zoos were used to provide two well-trained game wardens in the region with supplies for crocodile captures and tagging as well as food and basic supplies.

Population surveys for post-hurricane impacts are still ongoing so a reliable assessment will not be available for some time. Surveys began in February 2026 since most of the fishermen with access to various wetlands had their boats destroyed in the hurricane.

## **EUROPE**

Fabian Schmidt of Zoo Basel and Rosanna Mangione presented a comprehensive summary of zoo accomplishments in their Europe report. Of particular note is the focus of the European Association of Zoos & Aquaria (EAZA) Reptile Taxon Advisory Group regarding the promotion - through education of zoo industry professionals and zoo guests - of sustainable use in the conservation of crocodilians.

The Cologne Zoo supports initiatives for *C. mindorensis* both through Crocodylus Porosus Philippines, Inc (CPPI) and the Mabuwaya Foundation and has provided Cologne-hatched offspring for head-starting and release within the Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape.

The directors of Spain's Zoologico de Fuengirola in Spain and Crocodiles of the World in the UK head up a Species Committee to support the program goals of the Siamese crocodile EEP. Some EAZA zoos have recently gotten involved in direct conservation action on behalf of the species. Crocodiles of the World continues to collect data on its family group of *C. siamensis*, with behavioral data collected intended to inform zoo crocodile managers regarding the welfare benefits observed.

A Crocs of the World Crocodylian Husbandry Course is being written by Colin Stevenson and Claire Wilkie. Claire Wilkie is working on a crocodylian body score document with feedback from other CSG members from Crocodiles of the World and the BIAZA Reptile & Amphibian Working Group.

## **HONG KONG**

Ocean Park Hong Kong received a 35 kg, 1.9 m crocodile in 2023 that was discovered in Lin Fa Tei village, Yuen Long and then transported to their facility by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Estimated to be 2-3 years old at time of receipt, DNA testing revealed the animal was a Siamese x Cuban hybrid. Named "Passion," this animal now is on exhibit at the Ocean Park. She serves as an educational ambassador whose story highlights the dangers of invasive species to local ecosystems, promotes responsible pet ownership and highlighting the risks associated with the trade in exotic wildlife.

## **AUSTRALIA**

### Zoos Victoria, Parkville, Victoria

Zoos Victoria (ZV) continues its longstanding conservation partnership with the Mabuwaya Foundation Inc. in northeast Philippines, with a primary focus on the Critically Endangered Philippine crocodile, *Crocodylus mindorensis*. The species remains the most threatened species of crocodile in the world, with an estimated 120 adults in the wild. There are two

remaining known breeding populations, in Mindanao Island in the south and northeast Luzon Island in the north. Mabuwaya works on the north Luzon population. 2026 marks the 23rd year of the ZV-MFI partnership.

This partnership includes annual funding that assists with quarterly monitoring of wild crocodiles throughout Isabela and Cagayan Provinces. The total count in 2024/25 of 125 individuals (including hatchlings), which was the highest since conservation activities started in San Mariano in 2000.

In March 2024, Melbourne Zoo's Life Science Manager for Herpetology visited the Philippine Crocodile Conservation Centre (PCCC) at the San Mariano campus of Isabela State University to train Mabuwaya staff on crocodile introduction. Mating subsequently occurred and eggs were laid but they were infertile. The primary goal of the PCCC is to breed locally-sourced crocodiles and release young crocodiles at community-managed sites in Isabela and Cagayan Provinces.

A female Philippine crocodile was imported from Cologne Zoo in July 2025 to pair with the adult male at Melbourne Zoo. She has settled in well and was transferred to the Reptile House following completion of post-arrival quarantine. The two crocodiles are in separate exhibits and will be introduced at the appropriate time.

ZV provided additional funds in late 2024 to assist MFI support for communities hard hit by six successive typhoons that struck Cagayan Province between 20 October and 18 November. The full impacts of these on the crocodile population will not be known for some time.

### Australia Zoo, Beerwah, Queensland

Australia Zoo remains engaged in the largest and longest running telemetry study ever undertaken globally on any species. Research objectives: Investigating movement, distribution, abundance and diet to support the management of threatened riverine predators.

This research has been a collaboration between Australia Zoo and The University of Queensland since 2008, with research led by Professor Craig Franklin. Currently, 296 individual *C. porosus* are entered in this acoustic telemetry study, supplemented with targeted GPS tracking of select individuals which allows tracking outside of the acoustic receiver array. Technology developed around this research now includes acoustic tracking devices with a 7-10 year battery life and GPS tracking tags designed specifically for crocodilians, which use in-built solar recharging technology to extend data collection capabilities. GPS tracking systems are now accurate to within 1 metre.

The research extends far beyond movement tracking data, incorporating morphometrics, DNA analysis, body temperature monitoring via acoustic tag data, and stable isotope analysis. This comprehensive approach helps us better understand the growth and development, movement and known range occupation of relevant life stages, diet, and genetic representation of the current research cohort throughout the Wenlock River and its surrounding tributaries.

We have conclusively identified the territory residence of large adult male *C. porosus* by utilizing acoustic and GPS data with Google maps overlay. We now have nearly 20 years of data on certain individuals and their territory defence/roaming over this period. By utilizing built-in solenoid technology on GPS tags, this research has been able to clarify the breath hold capability of *C. porosus* above 7 hours. There is also significant data on female nesting behaviour and their preference for nest-site philopatry.

Research has been conducted on other riverine predators in the Wenlock and Ducie Rivers extending past Port Musgrave and into the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Wenlock River boasts the highest fish biodiversity in Australia and is an important breeding ground for several threatened and endangered elasmobranchs such as Freshwater rays, Sawfish, and Spear-toothed sharks. Research conducted on the Wenlock River and the discovery of its functionality in maintaining healthy breeding grounds for some of its Critically Endangered residents has been integral to legislative changes in commercial fishing practices in Queensland's Northern River systems.

### Crocodile Husbandry & Conservation Workshop in early 2027

The Reptile TAG of the Zoo & Aquarium Association (Australasia) is planning a Crocodile Husbandry & Conservation Workshop for early 2027. The venue is yet to be decided, and details will be announced on the ZAA website (<https://www.zooaquarium.org.au/>) when finalized.

### **FUTURE ENDEAVORS OF THE ZOOS THEMATIC GROUP**

With the understanding that the efforts of zoos listed herein likely excludes more zoos worldwide than those mentioned, future efforts will focus on making contact with more parks and aquaria working with crocodilians, especially those engaging in the support of in-situ crocodile conservation and research.

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