



Derek Ingham Mobile: 0409 240 571
Karen Ingham Mobile: 0409 240 577
Bicraft Pty Ltd ABN 59 091 734 593
PO Box 243 The Entrance NSW 2261
Phone: (02) 4388 3055
Email: derekas@ozemail.com.au

The Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*)

APPEARANCE

Long jaws, protective armour, streamlined body and long tail all perfectly suited to an aquatic and predatory lifestyle. Their features have changed very little from their prehistoric ancestors. Males can grow to 7 metres (23 feet) but most are less than 5 metres. Females are usually less than 4 metres in length and may begin nesting at 12 years of age. Their maximum lifespan is unknown, however, it is estimated that they can live for at least 70 to 100 years.

LIFESTYLE

Crocodiles are cold blooded and have a body temperature similar to their surroundings so they always seek a habitat with warm water and air temperature all year round. They have a preferred body temperature of 30-33° and utilise the water, sun and shade to regulate their body temperature.

FOOD

They have a key role as predators at the top of the food chain but can live for months at a time without feeding. Young crocodiles eat small animals like crabs, prawns, fish, frogs and insects while larger crocodiles eat larger prey such as pigs, birds, reptiles, turtles, wallabies and even other crocodiles. They use a combination of active hunting and a more passive "sit and wait" strategy. Movement of prey is detected by the enlarged sensory pits along the sides of the jaw.

BREEDING

Estuarine Crocodiles breed in the wet season (Nov-March). About 50 eggs are laid inside a nest mound and incubation takes between 65 and 110 days. The female usually guards the nest as she hides nearby. The incubation temperature determines the sex of the hatchlings with very high or very low temperatures producing females and temperatures of 32-33° producing males. Only about 25% of the eggs will hatch and less than 1% survive to adulthood. This is the average for most species in nature. Hatchlings weigh about 70g and about 25-30cm long and may be protected in a crèche for several months in the water by their mother.

PROTECTION

Crocodiles are a protected species and may not be farmed, hunted, used for display or kept as pets without a special permit

