

Outcomes:

- I know that animals have offspring
- I know that animals grow into adults
- I understand that some animals lay eggs
- I understand that an animal's diet changes as they grow

We're going to be working scientifically!

Eggs and hatchlings

Crocodiles and alligators reach maturity at around 15 years of age (that means they can be Mums and Dads at that age).

Crocodiles and alligators lay EGGS. Some small species lay only 16 eggs or so; some large species can lay over 50 eggs.



This is a crocodile egg compared to a 10p coin.

After laying, the eggs take around 70 days to HATCH. The young crocodiles are called HATCHLINGS.



Nests

When the mother crocodile is ready to lay eggs, she will build a NEST.

All alligators and around half of the crocodiles scrape together leaves, sticks, dirt and grasses into a large MOUND NEST. Here's a picture of a mound nest:



The other half of the crocodile species dig a hole in the sand at the edge of the river, and lay their eggs in there before covering it up again.

HATCHLINGS

Hatchling crocodiles are very small, between 8 and 12 inches long. They can be eaten by large birds, fish, lizards, turtles and other animals. Because they are so small, the parents will guard them, to protect them from predators. Young crocodiles spend a lot of time hiding under

They have tiny, but sharp teeth right away. What type of food do you think young crocodiles eat? (Circle your answers)

INSECTS

SMALL FISH

ZEBRA

PEOPLE

FROGS

JUVENILES

In the wild, most crocodiles do not survive past the first year or two of life. Those that survive grow to become JUVENILES.

Juvenile crocodiles are 3 or 4 times larger than they were as hatchlings.

Because they are bigger, not many other animals will be able to hunt them. The crocodiles will be eating larger prey than before. They will eat larger fish, small animals that come near the water, as well as some of the bigger insects.

So, as crocodiles grow bigger, they will eat larger and larger prey.

The crocodiles will not need to hide as much now that they are growing, but will still be wary of larger animals, such as jaguars and anacondas depending on where they live.



ADULTS

When some crocodiles grow up, they become the biggest reptiles alive today. The saltwater crocodile is the largest crocodile, with one croc recorded at around 21 foot long!

When this big, they find it hard to move easily on land, so they spend a lot of time in the water, or in thick mud to help support all that weight.

They can eat anything they can catch. They are big enough to eat almost any other animals, except those as big as elephants and rhinos.

Large crocodiles are still sometimes afraid of people, since people often kill crocodiles.

HOW MUCH do you KNOW?

1. Crocodiles hatch out of ____ . At this stage, crocodiles are called ____ .
2. Crocodiles start out eating I ____ CTS when they are young.
3. As they grow bigger, they can eat L ____ ER animals.
4. Because crocodiles eat meat, they are called C ____ N ____ V ____ S .
5. Crocodiles are PRED ____ T ____ S .

