

Big and bitey

CROCODILE PHYSIOLOGY

Small and mighty

SALTWATER CROCODILE

(*Crocodylus porosus*)

Saltwater crocodiles (salties) are the largest and most aggressive of all crocodilian species. They live in salt and freshwater. They have a wide snout, strong jaws and wide teeth. They are dangerous animals, with males growing to an average of 4.5 metres. Rarely, individuals can grow to over 6 metres in length. Females are smaller than males. Care should be taken when around ANY body of water or muddy area.

FRESHWATER CROCODILE

(*Crocodylus johnstoni*)

Freshwater crocodiles (freshies) live in freshwater and will tolerate saltwater for a short time. They have sharp, pointy teeth and a long narrow snout. Usually shy, they will avoid people (they can inflict a nasty bite if feeling threatened). Males grow to an average of less than 3 metres with some growing to 3.5 metres in length. Females are smaller than males.



WIDE SNOOT



STRONG + WIDE TEETH



SHARP + POINTY TEETH



NARROW SNOOT



GRASSY, MUDDY NESTS

Eggs are laid along river banks under mounds of rotting vegetation during the wet season. Between 40 and 60 eggs are laid, taking about 3 months to hatch.



SALTIE TAILS

Solid muscle, powerful and a major source of power. Almost half their body length, it is used for swimming and jumping out of water.



SMALL + LARGE PREY

LINGUAL SALT GLANDS Modified salivary glands in the tongue help remove excess salt from their bodies, allowing salties to survive in saltwater for a long time.



SMALL PREY

SALTWATER TOLERANCE Despite their common name, freshies can be found in brackish waters up to 2.4% salinity (seawater is 3.5%). Their lingual salt glands are not as functional as saltie glands.



FRESHIE TAILS

A freshie galloping. The tail is almost half of the body length.



SANDY NESTS

Eggs are laid in holes in sandy areas during the dry season. Between 4 and 20 eggs are laid, taking 3 months to hatch.



BURST SPEED

TEETH A reserve tooth sits underneath existing teeth to replace any that are lost. Old teeth are pushed out by newer ones about 50 times during a croc's lifespan.

TRAVEL Crocs are strong swimmers and can walk considerable distances over land.



FOVEAL STREAK

EYESIGHT Efficient lurk/ambush predators due to forward and side-facing eyes positioned closely together, allowing crocs to accurately judge the distance of prey without needing to turn their heads. Their pupil (foveal streak) is a vertical slit and opens wide at night to take more light into their eyes. The light is amplified by tapetum lucidum behind the retina for better vision in the dark. This is why their eyes shine red in light at night. Many nocturnal animals have tapetum lucidum but crocs are the only reptiles that have it. Each eye has 2 outer eyelids and 1 inner transparent eyelid that acts as a protective barrier while submerged underwater.



UNDERWATER



LURKING

Floating with only eyes and nostrils exposed enables crocs to approach prey undetected.



EARS

HEARING + SMELL Excellent hearing and smell above water. Crocs can hear very well below water. They shut their nostrils and ear flaps so water doesn't get in.



NOSTRILS



OSTEODERMS

ARMOUR Crocs are covered in scales. The dorsal surface is covered by bony plates (osteoderms) while the belly and sides are covered by soft scales. Osteoderms absorb the heat from the sun to warm the blood just like solar panels, as well as protecting the body from other predators.

HEART Crocs hold their breath underwater by bypassing the blood flow in the heart and lowering the heart rate to 2-3 beats per minute.

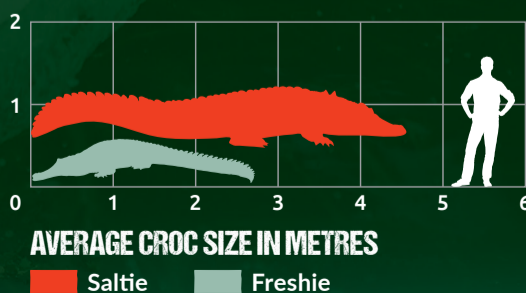


SENSE ORGANS

SENSORY CELLS Sensitive to movement in water due to integumentary sense organs in their skin. The tiny organs look like dots and are located all over the body but are densely distributed on sides of the jaw and arms. Crocs spread their arms out to detect the movement of prey.



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