



kakadu[®]
NATIONAL PARK

Crocodiles

Estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles are Australia's largest saltwater and freshwater predator, as well as the world's largest reptile.

Using stillness and camouflage to hide, and lightning reflexes to kill, the best way to safely see a crocodile in the wild is to book a commercial boat cruise. Another great viewing option is located at Cahills Crossing viewing platform where you can see a crocodile from the high-ground. The dry season is the best time of year to see crocodiles because they congregate in shrinking water bodies.

Aboriginal people are familiar with Kinga (salt-water crocodiles) and their behaviors on the land. Large crocodiles are respected and left alone, while smaller crocodiles may be caught and eaten for food. Crocodile eggs are also a nutritious food source for Aboriginal people.

Young people are not allowed to eat crocodile intestines. These are a delicacy reserved for the elderly, who fill them with crocodile fat and roast them on a fire.

In the creation era, a man and his wife were hunting for turtle in an escarpment pool, and the man was killed by Kinga, the first crocodile. When the woman saw his floating intestines she knew her husband was dead.

Kinga went down to the lowlands to live in the rivers and waterholes of the floodplains, and Modjarrki,

the smaller freshwater crocodile, remained in the escarpment pools. Today, when crocodiles are opened, their intestines resemble the skull of the man killed.

Both species of crocodile have intestines in that shape, and they are said to have come from a common ancestor.

An old Badmardi man speaks about crocodiles



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2

1 Estuarine (saltwater) crocodile

2 Crocodile management signs are used across the park. Warning signs are located near the escarpment where rangers check rock pools for estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles at the end of each wet season

3 An estuarine (saltwater) crocodile lurks in the water



3



BE CROCWISE 

For more information or to plan your trip visit

kakadu.gov.au

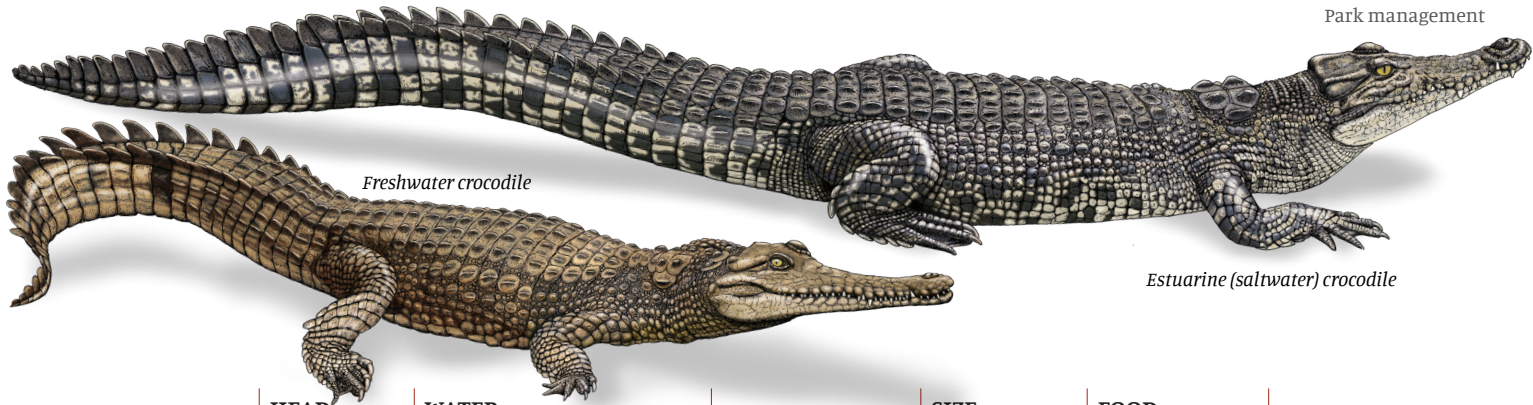


Australian Government
Parks Australia



Tragic deaths and injuries have occurred in the park due to crocodile attacks.
For your safety, please read and obey the warning signs.

Park management



NAME	HEAD SHAPE	WATER BEHAVIOR	HABITAT	SIZE AND AGE	FOOD SOURCE	BREEDING
MODJARRKI Freshwater crocodile (<i>crocodylus johnstoni</i>)	Narrow snout with a row of four osteoderms on the 'neck'	Spot only eyes and snout above the water, when resting near the surface	Freshwater rivers and billabongs, but rarely found in tidal rivers	Grows up to 3 metres long and can live for more than 50 years	Small animals: fish, frogs, lizards, snakes, rats, bats, birds, and insects	Lays eggs in sand during the dry season
KINGA Estuarine (saltwater) crocodile (<i>crocodylus porosus</i>)	Broad snout with a raised sections behind the 'neck'	Spot the large cranial platform located behind the eyes, that forms a distinct 'square patch' and will show above the water when resting near the surface	Freshwater rivers, coastal and open seas, tidal rivers, and billabongs	Grows up to 7 metres in long and can live for more than 70 years	Predominantly fish, but may eat birds, turtles, large land animals like bison, as well as humans	Covers eggs with mounds of decomposing vegetation along the river banks in the wet season

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 140 million years ago, crocodile ancestors lived before the age of the dinosaurs, and Phobusuchus, a prehistoric crocodile, was four times longer than the largest modern crocodile. Crocodiles are reptiles and use the environment to regulate their body temperature, for example they may bask in sunshine, opening their jaws wide to prevent their brains from overheating. An open mouth can also be a threat.

A territorial dispute may see the defeated crocodile venture hundreds of kilometres away in search of its own new territory. Most crocodiles can travel faster than 10 km per hour short bursts, and freshwater crocodiles have been observed reaching 18 km per hour moving downhill toward the water.

NATURAL HABITATS

Kakadu National Park is home to two crocodile species. Freshwater crocodiles (*crocodylus johnstoni*), are only found in northern Australia, whereas estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles (*crocodylus porosus*), are located in Australia, as well as other countries like India, Southeast Asia, the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago, and Papua New Guinea. The rivers of Kakadu are named the 'Alligator Rivers' by coastal explorer Phillip Parker King, who in 1820, incorrectly assumed the crocodiles he saw there were alligators.

CROCODILE MANAGEMENT

Crocodile habitats are protected throughout Kakadu and regular surveys monitor their numbers and distribution. A crocodile may be captured if showing overt interest towards humans. Sometimes a crocodile may be released and monitored at its capture site, whereas others may need a full relocation. Occasionally some are sent to crocodile farms to avoid creating a territorial dispute.

FEW CROCODILES REACH MATURITY

Crocodile eggs are drowned when submerged nests are flooded during the wet season. Young crocodiles are often eaten by goannas, birds, fish, other crocodiles, and feral pigs. Mature crocodiles will compete for territory and often fight to the death. Nicknamed 'Boss', a large crocodile will have well-established territories in Kakadu, sometimes surviving years of peer aggression to become the king — they are often more than 5 metres long in length!

A CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORY

A vital part of the food chain, they maintain the natural balance of wetland ecosystems. Between 1940 and 1960, the reptiles were close to extinction because they were hunted for skins and sport. In 1971 a protection was placed on the species and their numbers have returned to healthy levels.

For more information contact

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