

Crocodiles in the Maya World

To the Ancient Maya, crocodiles were not feared, but revered...

- Crocodiles were so important they are the first symbol on the Maya Calendar, representing the god Imix. Crocodiles also were connected to the god Itzam Na, the creator god... thus crocodiles were important in regards to creation. Given this importance, crocodiles were highly worshipped by nobles

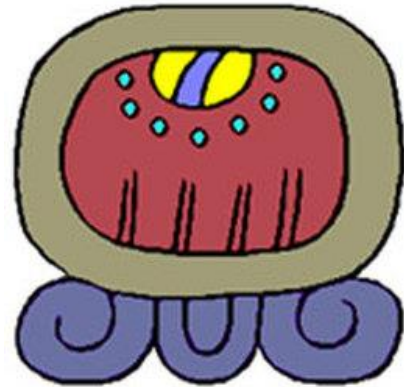
- Crocodiles were not seen as a symbol of death, but a sign of life given their connection to the heavens (aka, hatchling calls. It was believed the rainy season came about due to hatchling calls. Rain = heaven)

- Crocodiles were the only animal to connect the heavens (as mentioned above) the earth (given their role as apex predators), and the underworld (crocs are found in caves which they use as passage ways from one body of water to the next. Caves were seen as roads to Xibalba, the underworld)

- Fertility is birth, it is life; it is what crocodiles do. One of the tasks of crocodiles with nature is to search for life: they search for water, a crucial element for the fertility of the earth; like a terrestrial element they can obtain it in the sources of water, and like a celestial element, through rainfall. Therefore, the crocodile is terrestrial, celestial, and from the underworld as well.

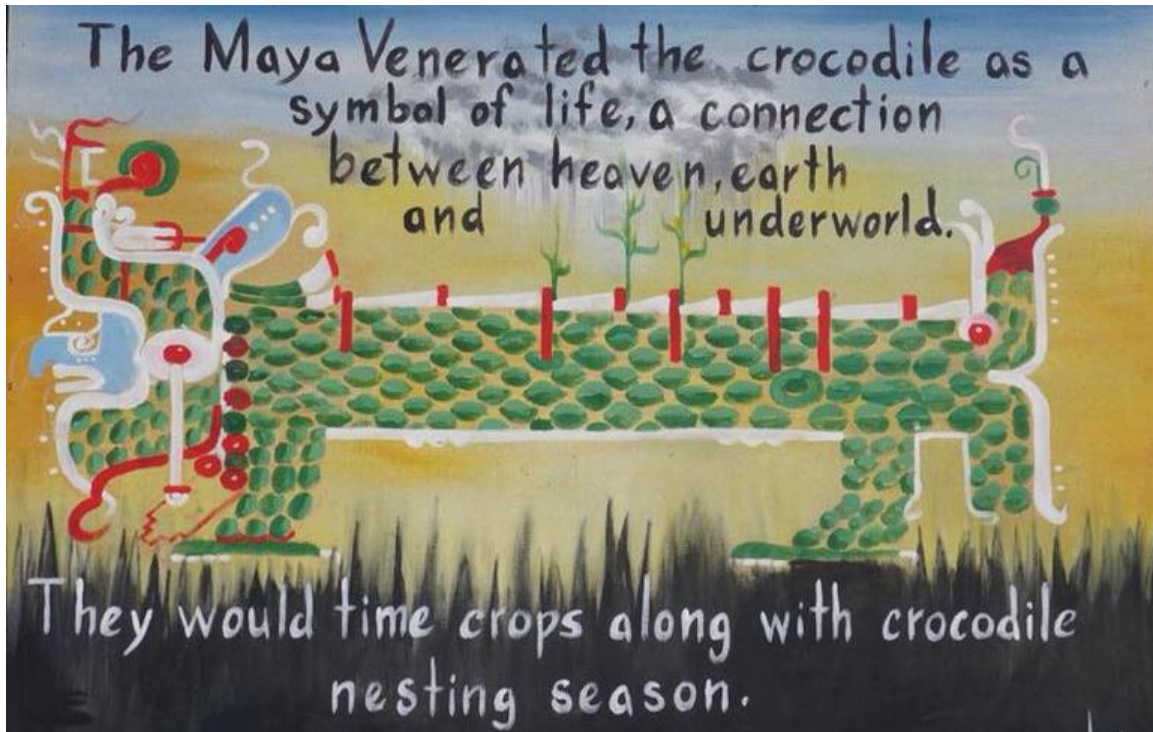
- Crocodiles were not believe to have the ability to "die"... when they submerge they are believed to go into the original celestial plane (water = life), and when they emerge, they are reborn

- Given crocodiles need water, the Maya would put crocodiles in local water ponds... if it dried up they would follow crocodiles to the next body of water, which would also become the water source for the local Maya



- Crocodiles were seen as signs of good fishing. So the Maya weren't fearful when they saw crocodiles in the water, instead, they were grateful these creatures led them to a good fishing spot!

- Maya in Toledo today swim within crocs for spear-fishing. They just know not to go spear-fishing in the early morning or evening, or night time (as that is croc prime-time feeding time!)



Above information was provided by **Crocodile Research Coalition**
For further information please contact the Crocodile Research Coalition at
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Or check out our website for continual croc fact updates: **www.crocodileresearchcoalition.org**