

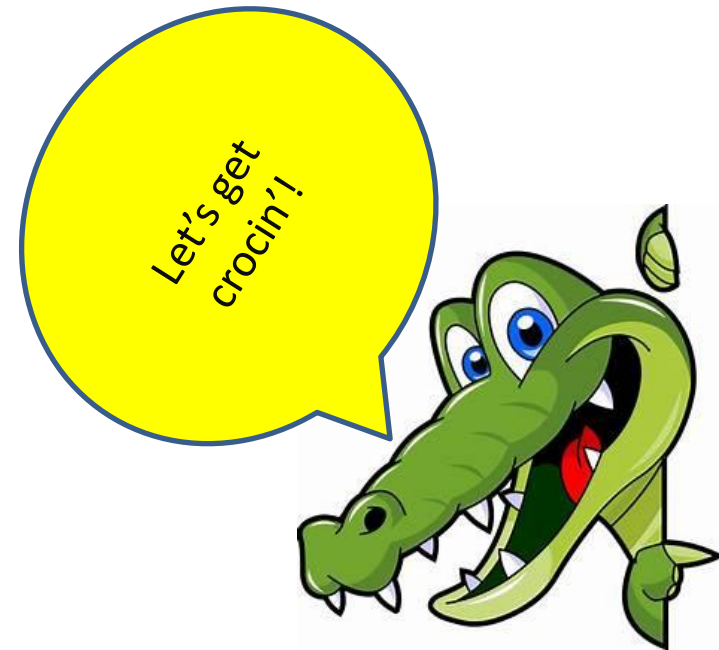
# **CROCODILE RESEARCH COALITION CONSERVATION ACTIVITY BOOKLET**



Let's have  
some fun with  
Crocs

# Message from CRC

The Crocodile Research Coalition would like to share with all parents and children of all ages the wonderful world of crocodiles! This booklet is to help you sink your teeth into conservation, learning more about crocodiles, their habitat, and some of the other wonderful wildlife you can find in crocodilian habitat. This booklet consists of educational games, stories, arts & crafts, and coloring. Enjoy!



# Scramble the words to learn 5 facts about Morris Moreletti

- 1. EPLRETIS \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. RSHAWEERTF \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. HISF \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. MGAONVRE \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. rpye \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. RBAC \_\_\_\_\_

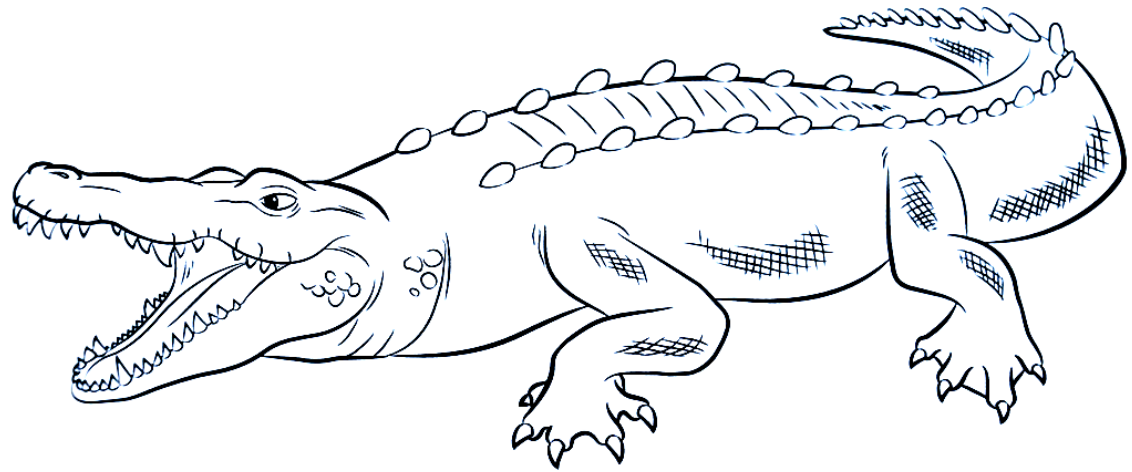
Let's get to know each other!



# Ally Acutus Jaw Power

Meet one of 2 croc species from Belize, the American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*). Like the other 27 species of crocodylians, they have some serious jaw power! The bite force of an adult crocodile can range between 3,000 – 5,000 pounds/square inch, holding the record for the strongest bite force in the animal kingdom!

With your parents' assistance, show off your jaw power by making an Ally Acutus jaw cap. Instructions are on the following page.



# ALLY ACUTUS CAP

## Instructions:

- 1) Find a white paper plate (make sure it's not your regular dish plate as you will be painting the entire plate!)
- 2) With a pencil draw out two letter "C" on top of the plate.
- 3) After you have drawn it, you cut/ trace the letter to form an eye...
- 4) To make the eye, you can either color it or draw it separately and just glue it to the top
- 5) Next you are going to draw a set of crocodile teeth on a piece of white paper and just cut it off and glue it under the plate
- 6) Lastly you will measure a string to your head and then glue it to the plate to form a cap.
- 7) Now sink your teeth into conservation!

## Things you will need:

- Scissors
- Green paint, marker or crayon
- Glue
- Marker
- Plate
- String



# CROCODILES AND THE MAYA

The Maya had much reverence towards crocodiles, not seeing them as a sign of death, but of life, fertility and new beginnings. Crocodiles were so important that they are represented as the 1st day sign in the Maya calendar by the god Imix. Crocodiles were also one of two animals (the jaguar being the other) that connected the heavens, the earth and the underworld. How? Find out on the next page. After reading, draw out a representation of crocs in the three different realms (heaven, earth, and the underworld)!



# CROCODILES AND THE MAYA

**Heavens:** crocodile hatchlings hatch at the beginning of the rainy season so when the Maya would hear the cries of crocodile hatchlings, they knew it was the beginning of the rainy season. For them, the gods used crocodiles to "communicate" to people it was time to plant or harvest certain crops. Thus, crocodiles were the messengers of the gods.

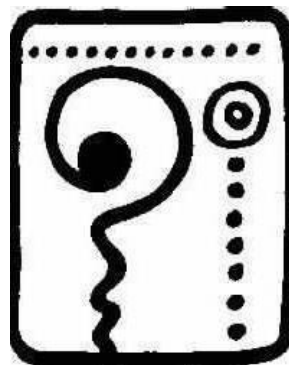
**Earth:** crocodiles were seen as important players in balancing the ecosystem. Additionally, Maya fishermen would look for crocodiles to go fishing as they made the connection that crocodiles would only inhabit areas with lots of food, aka lots of fish! Another cool fact: at the peak of the dry season a Maya warrior would watch over a waterhole with a crocodile in it. As the crocodile left the waterhole, the warrior would follow the crocodile to the next fresh body of water- it was seen that the gods used crocodiles to guide the Maya to freshwater.

**Underworld:** still to this day, we find crocodiles in caves. Caves were the entrance to the underworld. Therefore the Maya believed crocodiles in caves guided the souls of the recently deceased to the underworld, or Xibalba.

**Heaven**



**Earth**

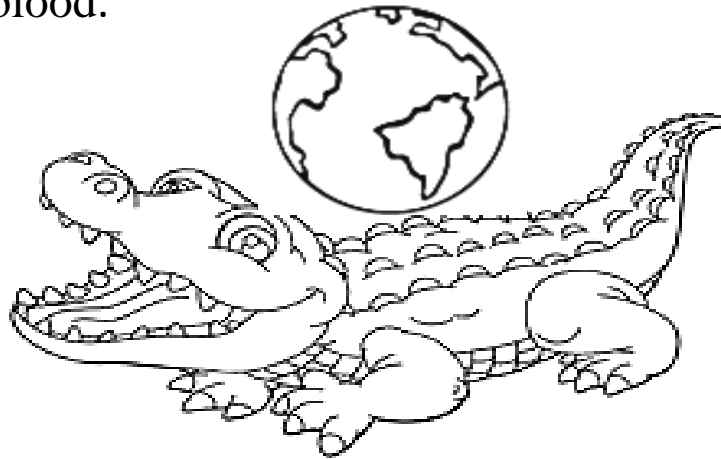


**Underworld**



# WE ARE ALL MADE OF CROCODILE BLOOD

One of the Maya creation stories stated that the world sat on top of a crocodile's back. The Crocodile was the guardian, the protector of Earth. One day, a Sky Monster wanted to devour the Earth- the Crocodile and the Sky Monster battled amongst the stars. To save the Earth, the Crocodile sacrificed himself while slaying the Sky Monster simultaneously. When the blood of the crocodile reached Earth, the blood transformed into people. For many Maya, the ancestral connection to crocodiles generated into respect and reverence towards crocodiles as we are all made of crocodile blood.

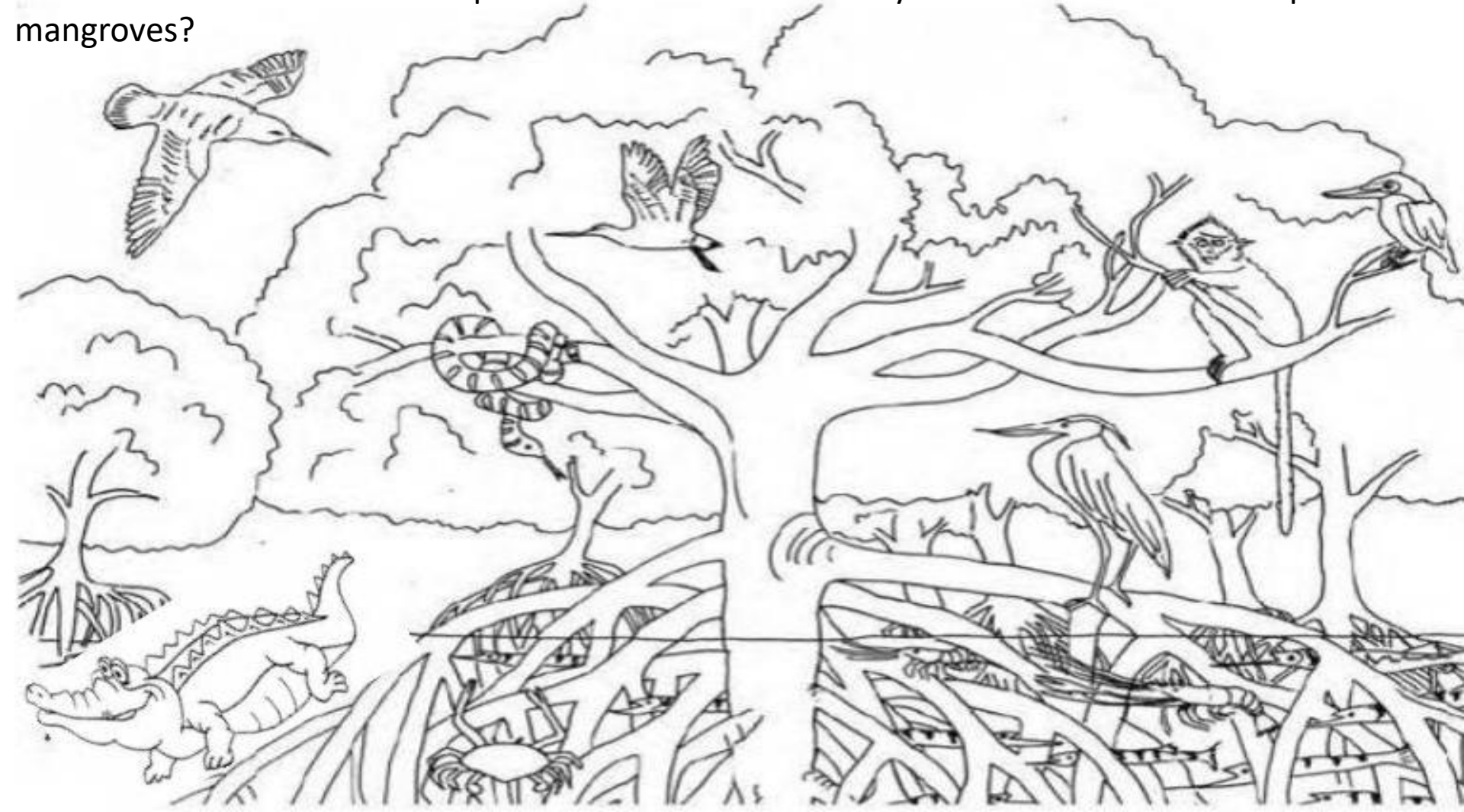


*Make a book that illustrates the story of the Crocodile Guardian.*



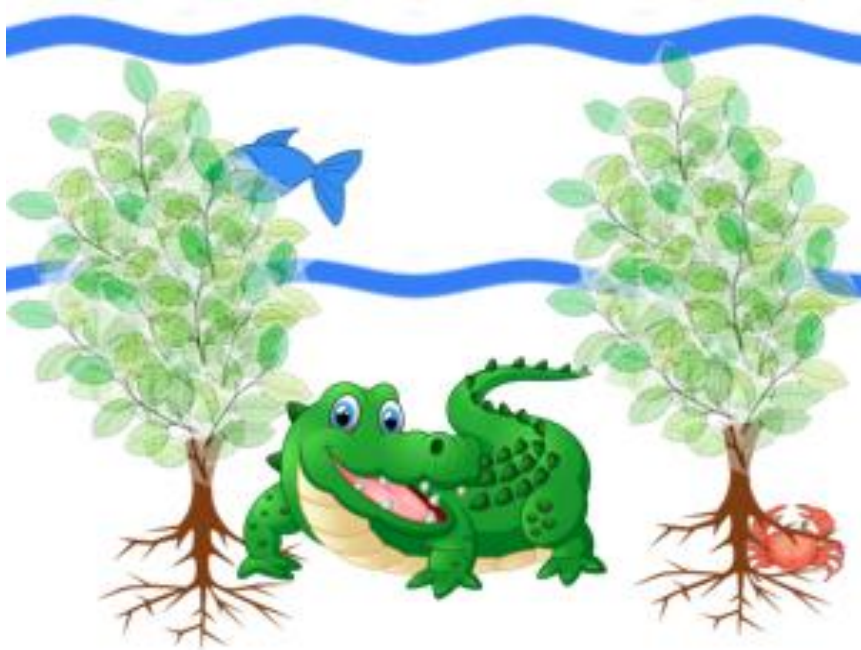
# HEALTHY MANGROVES, HEALTHY REEFS

Mangroves are important for the sustainability of communities and biodiversity. They protect shorelines from hurricanes, prevent erosion by stabilizing sediments, are used by various wildlife as nursery, and provide shallow bodies of water around the Placencia Lagoon in which the manatee and crocs love to sleep and eat! What animals do you see below that also depend on mangroves?



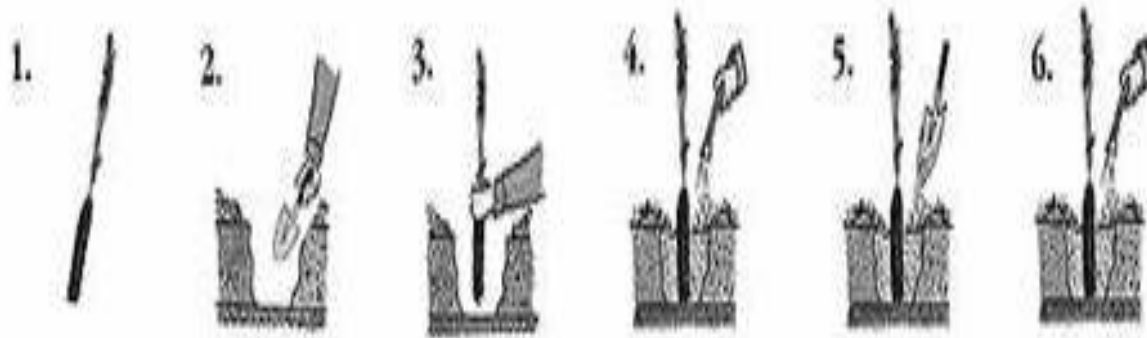
Can you spot the 12 differences between these two pictures?

The picture on the right is a crocodile's natural habitat. Can you find the 12 different ways humans have changed the area surrounding our crocodiles?



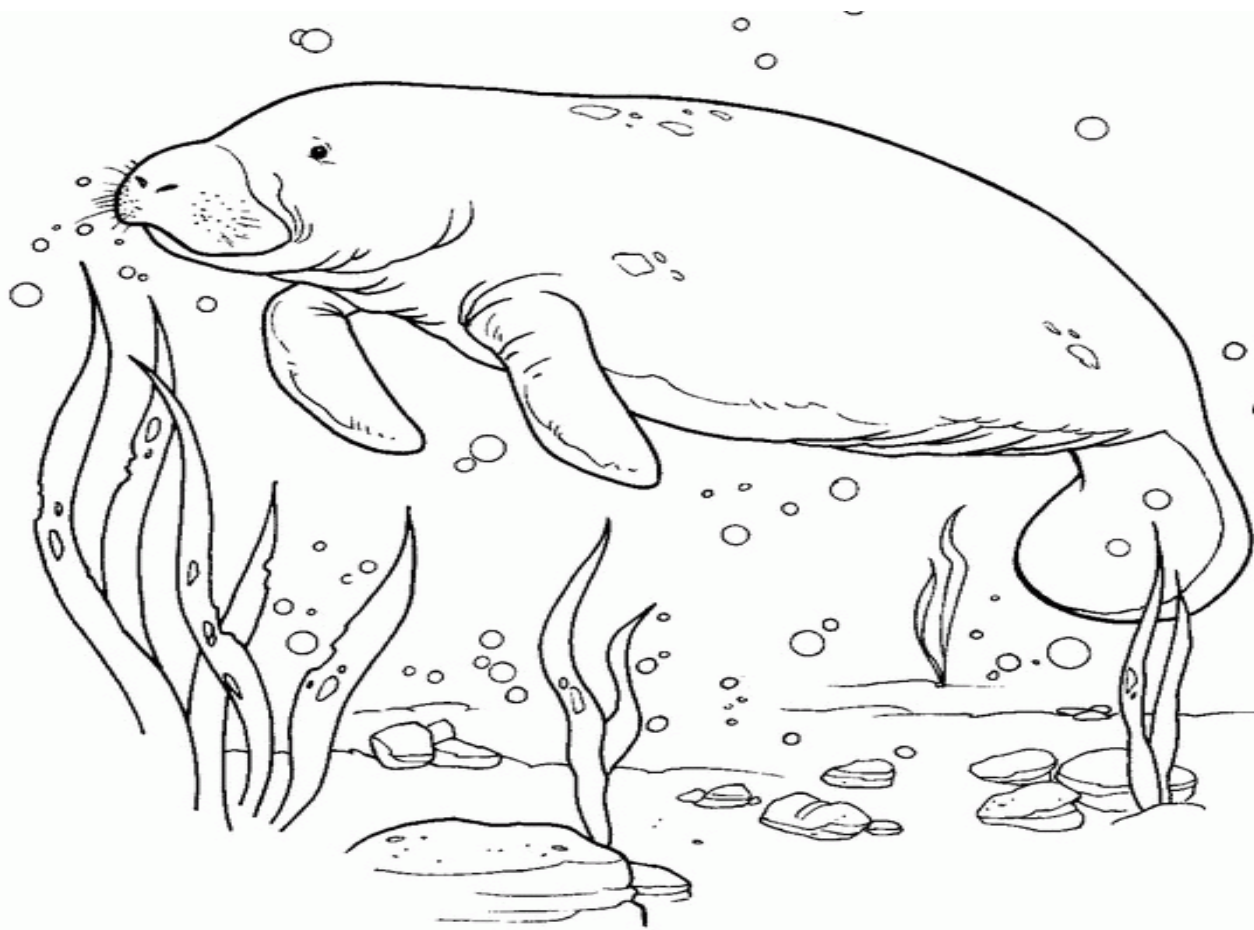
# Healthy Mangroves, Healthy Reefs!

Like mangroves, trees and other plants are very important for providing food and shelter for various wildlife, as well as provide valuable natural resources to local communities. With your parents help, plant a flower, tree or other type of vegetation of your choice and share with us your accomplishment on one of our social media outlets!



**Be green and plant  
a tree!**





**A manatee is a type of mammal and is often known as the Sea Cow.**

**Fun Fact**



**Manatees and crocs can often be found in the same habitat swimming around each other.**



# MAKE YOUR OWN CROC

Crocodile eyesight is just as good as ours, yet their eyesight is adapted for their predatory lifestyle. Inside their eye is something known as a fovea. Our fovea is circular; so if we want to scan the shoreline we have to turn our head (not great for an ambush predator). The fovea in crocodiles is horizontal, giving them a panoramic view of the shoreline. This means less movement scanning the shoreline, making them more stealth. Why is this a good adaptation for an ambush predator? (answer in the last page )

How stealth can you be as a crocodile? Let's make a crocodile and find out!

## **Instructions:**

- 1) Cut a small strip of paper (color it any color if you don't have green paper) and fold it so it creates folds
- 2) Glue this strip of paper on the back of a clothespin (so it looks like the back of a crocodile)
- 3) Cut 2 small pieces from a pipe cleaner and put it in the front and back of the clothespin (legs of crocodile)
- 4) Lastly, glue eyes on top or on the side of the crocodile (don't have googly eyes? Draw them!)
- 5) Now be a crocodile and be stealth to sneak up on a parent!

## **Things you will need:**

Googly eyes  
Clothes pin  
Green color paper  
Glue  
Pipe cleaners



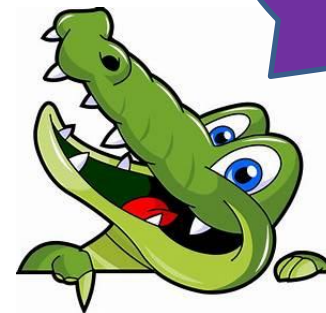
# LET'S LEARN ABOUT OUR BACKYARD BIRDS!

I spy with my little croc eye... "These two birds are common around Belize. Write down their names, and then see how many you can spot from your window or yard! What other birds can you see and identify? Share with us your pictures and answers!"



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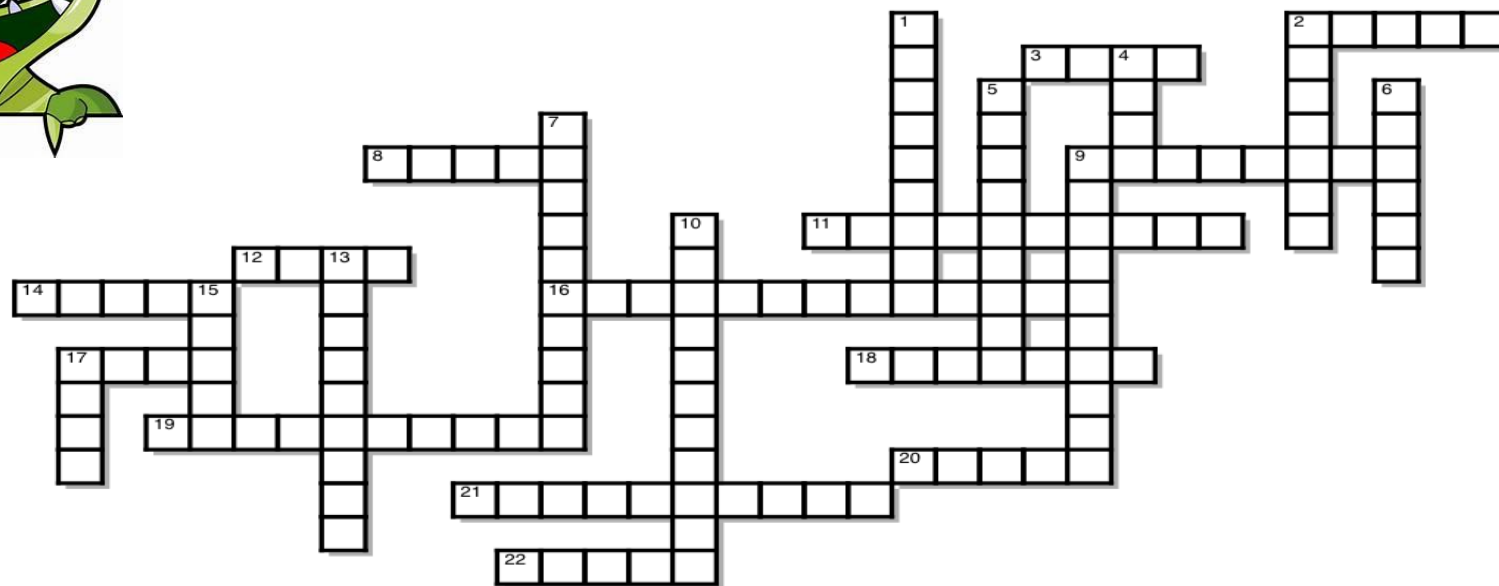
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Birds and Crocs are each other's closest living relatives!



# Crocodile Crossword Puzzle



## ACROSS

- 2 A group of crocodiles in the water.
- 3 Oviparous reptiles lay \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 Large body of saline water, covering 75% of Earth's surface.
- 9 You can spot a crocodile at night using its \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11 Knobs of bone covered with skin, making bumps on a crocodile's back.
- 12 A female crocodile builds a \_\_\_\_\_ to incubate her eggs in.
- 14 Which is a crocodile's weakest sense?
- 16 State of increasing temperatures caused by humans polluting the environment.
- 17 The crocodile has the most powerful \_\_\_\_\_ of any species.
- 18 Hunting of crocodiles is \_\_\_\_\_ in Belize.
- 19 Status of Morelet's crocodiles, according to the Belize Wildlife Protection Act.
- 20 Crocodile \_\_\_\_\_, a cliché implying hypocrisy.
- 21 Stone found in a crocodile's stomach to aid

digestion.

- 22 Crocodiles' \_\_\_\_\_ are made into wallets, hats, purses, belts, and other accessories.

## DOWN

- 1 A similar species often confused with crocodiles.
- 2 A state in the US, the only place where crocodiles and alligators can be found together.
- 4 Customary crocodile color.
- 5 *Crocodylus Acutus*
- 6 Length (in feet) of the longest American Crocodile ever measured.
- 7 Status of American crocodiles, according to the Belize Wildlife Protection Act.
- 9 National Park in the United States where this species can be found.
- 10 Destruction of territory, a factor of endangerment.
- 13 While alligators are restricted to freshwater habitats, American crocodiles are known for their ability to survive in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 15 Crocodiles and alligators can be distinguished by the pattern of their \_\_\_\_\_.
- 17 A group of crocodiles on land.

# BONUS QUESTION

**BONUS:** How does development impact wildlife and communities? Google on the web how unsustainable mangrove deforestation or overdevelopment can cause loss of biodiversity and learn about the impact this has on wildlife and people. Talk to your parents about solutions that promote sustainability and coexistence!





# Answer Sheet

Scramble the words to learn 5 facts about Morris Moreletti

1. EPLRETIS : Reptiles
2. RSHAWEERTF : Freshwater
3. HISF : Fish
4. MGAONVRE : Mangrove
5. rpye: Prey
6. RBAC : Crab

Thank You for finding out what Morris Moreletti crocodile eat and where they live.

*Let's Learn about our backyard Birds*

*Spot with your little eyes this two birds in your backyard and tell us their names  
look outside your window to see the birds.*



Osprey



Great Kiskadee

**Can you spot the 12 differences between these two pictures?**

**The picture on the right is a crocodile's natural habitat. Can you find the 12 different ways humans have changed the area surrounding our crocodiles?**

- 1) Mangrove not there
- 2) Hotel 1
- 3) Hotel 2
- 4) Vulture gone
- 5) Great Blue Heron gone
- 6) Increase boat traffic
- 7) Increase water sports
- 8) No fish
- 9) No crab
- 10) Trash
- 11) Plastic bag
- 12) Less crocs

**Make Your Own Croc Question:** Why is less movement a good adaptation for an ambush predator?

**Answer:** An ambush predator is a predator that sits and waits or remains motionless to be able to sneak up on its prey. For a crocodile, the less movement it makes in the water, the more likely some animals may think it is just a rock or log. Thus, the fovea assists crocodiles to be stealth, allowing them to sneak up on their prey and SNAP!!!

# Answer Sheet

Across:

2. A group of crocodiles in the water. **FLOAT**
3. Oviparous reptiles lay **EGGS.**
8. Large body of saline water, covering 75% of Earth's surface. **OCEAN**
9. You can spot a crocodile at night using its **EYESHINE.**
11. Knobs of bone covered with skin, making bumps on a crocodile's back. **OSTEODERMS**
12. A female crocodile builds a **NEST** to incubate her eggs in.
14. Which is a crocodile's weakest sense? **SIGHT**
16. State of increasing temperatures caused by humans polluting the environment. **GLOBAL WARMING**
17. The crocodile has the most powerful **BITE** of any species.
18. Hunting of crocodiles is **ILLEGAL** in Belize.
19. Status of Morelet's crocodiles, according to the Belize Wildlife Protection Act. **THREATENED**
20. Crocodile **TEARS**, a cliché implying hypocrisy.
21. Stone found in a crocodile's stomach to aid digestion. **GASTROLITH**
22. Crocodiles' **HIDES** are made into wallets, hats, purses, belts, and other accessories.

Down:

1. A similar species often confused with crocodiles. **ALLIGATOR**
2. A state in the US, the only place where crocodiles and alligators can be found together. **FLORIDA**
4. Customary crocodile color. **GRAY**
5. *Crocodylus acutus* **Crocodile**
6. Length (in feet) of the longest American Crocodile ever measured. **TWENTY**
7. Status of American crocodiles, according to the Belize Wildlife Protection Act. **ENDANGERED**
9. National Park in the United States where this species can be found. **EVERGLADES**
10. Destruction of territory, a factor of endangerment. **HABITAT LOSS**
13. While alligators are restricted to freshwater habitats, American crocodiles are known for their ability to survive in **SALT WATER.**
15. Crocodiles and alligators can be distinguished by the pattern of their **TEETH.**
17. A group of crocodiles in land. **BASK**