***CROCS: Ancient Predators in a Modern World***

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**Did You Know?**

* Crocodilians are more closely related to birds than other modern reptiles. They’re the only surviving members of the group archosaurs that dominated life on earth for more than 150 million years.
* A large croc can survive a year or more without eating.
* While most other reptiles have only three chambers, crocodiles have four-chambered hearts like mammals and birds.
* While crocodilians can close their jaws and bite with a great amount of power, the muscles that open their jaws are quite weak and can be held shut with a rubber band!
* Alligators generally have broad snouts compared to narrow, triangular snouts of crocodiles.
* Crocodiles can generate around 250,000 pounds per square inch of pressure on the tips of their teeth. They also go through as many as 3,000 teeth in their lives.
* Crocs don’t have sweat glands so they release heat by resting with their mouth wide open, similar to a dog panting.
* Some alligators stop eating and become inactive during winter, a condition called brumation. They rest with their nostrils above the surface of the water to ensure they can breathe even if the water ices over.
* One of the largest crocodilians ever known is the extinct *Sarcosuchus,* which lived during the early Cretaceous Period and was found in North Africa. Scientists believe *Sarcosuchus* was nearly 40 feet long.
* Crocodiles have salt glands in their tongues which allow them to live in salt water. Alligators and caimans, which live in fresh water, do not have these glands.
* Unlike other crocodilians, gharials take care of their young in large communal groups called crèches. A guarding male can babysit up to a thousand baby gharials, even those fathered by other males.
* It took 20 men to pull Gomek (then ‘only’ 16 feet long) onto a boat.
* Tiny nerve-filled bumps around the mouths of crocodilians detect tiny vibrations in water, enabling them to catch prey without seeing it.
* Proteins in their blood give crocs immunity against bacteria, viruses, amoebas and fungi.
* Unlike birds and mammals, an alligator’s sex isn’t determined at conception but by the temperature at which the eggs are incubated.
* Crocs are talkative animals and begin vocalizing when in the egg to synchronize hatching and alert the mothers.
* Large crocodilians can live to be 100 years old!
* A specialized tooth located on the nose of crocodilians helps the babies break their egg open. The tooth disappears within a few weeks of hatching.