

Name _____

Crocodile Reproduction: Guardians of the Nest



Crocodiles have fascinating reproductive behaviors. During the mating season, which often occurs in the warmer months, male crocodiles attract females by making low growling sounds and splashing water with their tails. Once a pair has formed, they will mate in the water.

After mating, the female crocodile searches for a safe place to lay her eggs. She builds a nest using mud, leaves, and plants near the water's edge. The female can lay between 20 to 60 eggs in a single clutch. She carefully covers the eggs to protect them from predators and keeps watch over the nest.

The gestation period, or the time it takes for the eggs to develop and hatch, is about 80 to 90 days. During this time, the mother guards the nest closely. When the eggs are ready to hatch, the baby crocodiles make high-pitched noises from inside the eggs. This signals the mother to help uncover the nest and assist the hatchlings as they emerge.

Once the babies hatch, the mother often carries them in her mouth to the water to keep them safe. Young crocodiles are vulnerable to many predators, so the mother stays nearby to protect them for several weeks or even months. Despite her care, only a few hatchlings survive to adulthood due to natural dangers.