

Name _____

The Life Cycle of a Crocodile



The life cycle of a crocodile is fascinating and full of changes. Crocodiles are reptiles that begin their life as eggs. A mother crocodile lays her eggs in a nest made of mud, plants, and sand, usually near the water. She lays between 20 to 60 eggs and covers them to keep them safe from predators. The eggs take about 80 to 90 days to hatch.

Once the eggs hatch, the baby crocodiles, called hatchlings, use their tiny teeth to break out of their shells. They are very small, only about 7 to 10 inches long. The mother often helps her babies get to the water safely by carrying them in her mouth. Hatchlings stay close to their mother for protection but must learn to hunt small insects and fish on their own.

As the crocodile grows, it enters the juvenile stage. Juveniles are still small but becoming better hunters. They start to eat larger prey like frogs and small birds. Crocodiles continue to grow throughout their lives, which makes them different from many other animals.

After several years, a crocodile becomes an adult. Adult crocodiles are powerful hunters. They can eat larger prey, including fish, birds, and mammals like deer. Crocodiles have sharp teeth and strong jaws that help them catch their food. Adult crocodiles can grow up to 20 feet long and weigh over 2,000 pounds!

Crocodiles can live a very long time, often reaching 70 to 100 years old. Some of the oldest crocodiles have even lived more than 100 years. These ancient reptiles play an important role in their ecosystems by keeping the food chain balanced.