

Name _____



The Crocodile's Role in the Ecosystem

Crocodiles play an important role in their ecosystems. As apex predators, they help keep the balance of animal populations in check.

This means they control the number of prey animals like fish, birds, and small mammals.

Without crocodiles, these prey populations

could grow too large, causing damage to the ecosystem.

Crocodiles also play a key part in the food chain. They serve as both predators and prey. When young crocodiles are small, they are hunted by birds, large fish, and even other crocodiles. However, adult crocodiles have fewer natural predators because of their size and strength.

In addition to controlling animal populations, crocodiles help keep wetlands healthy. As they move through water, they create channels and clear out plants. This helps other species thrive by keeping the water flow steady and preventing blockages.

Crocodiles even contribute after they die. When a crocodile dies, its body provides food for scavengers and nutrients for the environment, which helps plants grow and supports the entire food web.

By controlling prey populations, maintaining healthy waterways, and contributing nutrients to the environment, crocodiles play a vital role in keeping their habitats balanced and thriving.