

Name _____

Crocodile Relationships with Other Species



Crocodiles are fascinating reptiles that can form relationships with other species in nature. While they are often seen as solitary predators, crocodiles engage in some interesting partnerships with other animals.

One example of mutualism, where both species benefit, is the relationship between crocodiles and the Egyptian plover bird. This small bird helps crocodiles by eating food scraps and parasites from their mouths. The bird gets a meal, while the crocodile gets cleaner teeth, which helps it stay healthy.

Crocodiles can also experience parasitism. Leeches and other parasites may attach themselves to a crocodile's body, feeding on its blood. This relationship harms the crocodile while benefiting the parasite.

Commensalism, where one species benefits while the other is not affected, can also be observed. Fish sometimes follow crocodiles, eating the leftovers from their meals. The crocodile is neither helped nor harmed, but the fish gain food.

Although crocodiles are mostly known for their powerful hunting skills, these relationships show how they can interact with other species in ways that help keep the ecosystem balanced.