

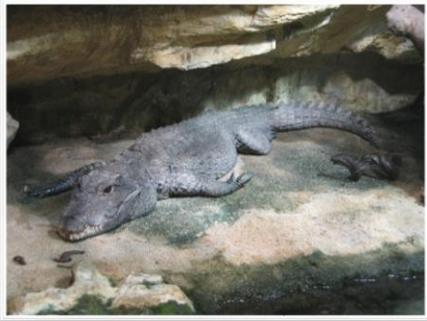
Dwarf Crocodile

Scientific Name: *Osteolaemus tetraspis*

Class: Reptilia

Order: Crocodylia

Family: Crocodylidae



The Dwarf Crocodile is a heavily armored, small crocodile which reaches a maximum length of 6.5 feet. The Dwarf Crocodile has a short snout, and the upper eyelid is almost completely ossified. It is a timid, slow moving, nocturnal animal which, as an adult is usually solitary. Although it usually feeds in water it apparently spends a lot of time on land and it inhabits holes excavated in the banks of streams.

Range

The Dwarf Crocodile has a range of West and West Central Africa including Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Camerons, Gabon, Liberia and Angola.

Habitat

Dwarf crocodiles inhabit swamps and swamp forests; and slow moving, calm bodies of water.

Gestation

The incubation period of dwarf crocodile eggs is 85-105 days.

Litter

Clutch size ranges from 16 to 30 eggs.

Behavior

The Dwarf Crocodile is a timid, slow moving, nocturnal animal which as an adult is usually solitary. Even though it usually feeds in water, it apparently spends a lot of time on land, and inhabits holes excavated in the banks of streams. In forested areas they are known to make extensive nocturnal forays on land, especially after rains, but the purpose of these trips is not fully understood.

Reproduction

Female dwarf crocodiles are mound-nesters, constructing a nest that is approximately 5 feet in diameter. The eggs are laid early in the wet season. Newly laid eggs are semi-transparent and a yellowish color. One day after the eggs are laid, they begin to exhibit a narrow white band which expands with time to give the whole egg a milky white appearance. After the first crack appears in an egg, hatching may take up to a week. Females are good mothers, guarding the eggs in carefully constructed nests. Hatchlings are 8-12" long and weigh about 1¼ ounces. After hatching the young remain with the mother for several weeks.

Wild Diet

Their diet in the wild consists of fish, frogs, and crustaceans.