

FRESHWATER CROCODILE

HABITAT

The Freshwater Crocodile lives in and around bodies of freshwater in warmer tropical regions well upstream and away from the coast. They are native to the northern reaches of Western Australia, the Northern Territory, and Queensland.^[1]

DIET

They wait just below the surface of the water for their prey to come close enough so they can grab it and pull it back in. They hunt more actively in shallow water, chasing down frogs and small crustaceans. They also eat bats, fish, lizards, small mammals, and turtles.^[2]

REPRODUCTION

They start breeding at around 15 to 20 years old. Females lay 4 to 20 eggs throughout August and September in holes that they dig in the dirt or sand next to the water. The parents then leave the eggs to develop for 65 to 90 days until they hatch at the start of the rainy season.^[3]

THREATS

They have been known to eat Cane Toads, which are highly toxic when consumed.^[4] Feral cattle also trample their eggs when drinking at the edge of a body of water.^[5]

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

It is illegal to harvest, farm, and trade crocodiles and their eggs in the Northern Territory,^[6] Queensland,^[7] and Western Australia without a permit.^[8]



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DESCRIPTION

The males grow up to 2.5m long and weigh up to 60kg, while the females grow up to 1.8m long and weigh up to 30kg. They are grey or olive brown and have bony ridges along their backs.^[9]

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Crocodylus johnston^[10]

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern^[11]

CLASS

Reptiles^[12]

LIFESPAN

Up to 60 years^[13]

POPULATION SIZE

Around 100,000^[14]

FUN FACT

When they are out of the water, they can run up to 18km/h, but this tires them out very quickly.^[15]

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- ^[1] Department of Environment and Science (DES), 'Freshwater crocodile', *Queensland Government* (18 Oct. 2021), Crocodile country, <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/crocodiles/about-crocodiles/freshwater>, accessed 6 Apr. 2023.
- ^[2] DES, 'Freshwater crocodile', Feeding.
- ^[3] DES, 'Freshwater crocodile', Breeding.
- ^[4] Australian Museum, 'Freshwater crocodile', *Australian Museum* (19 Nov. 2020), Predators, <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/reptiles/freshwater-crocodile/>, accessed 18 May 2023.
- ^[5] V. Cramer, 'Understanding complex interactions the key to the freshwater croc's future', *CSIRO ECOS* (28 Feb. 2020), Silent Threats, <https://ecos.csiro.au/understanding-complex-interactions-the-key-to-the-freshwater-crocs-future/>, accessed 18 May 2023.
- ^[6] Northern Territory Government, 'Freshwater crocodile conservation', *Northern Territory Government* (21 Jan. 2016), Harvesting freshwater crocodiles, <https://nt.gov.au/environment/animals/conservation-of-crocodiles/freshwater-crocodile-conservation>, accessed 25 May 2023.
- ^[7] DES, 'Plants and animals', *Queensland Government* (30 Nov. 2022), para. 1, <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/plants-animals>, accessed 6 Apr. 2023.
- ^[8] Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, 'Living with crocodiles', *Government of Western Australia* (n.d.), Living with crocodiles, <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/129>, accessed 23 May 2023.
- ^[9] DES, 'Freshwater crocodile', Appearance.
- ^[10] DES, 'Species profile—*Crocodylus johnstoni* (Australian freshwater crocodile)', *Queensland Government* (8 Mar. 2022), Scientific name, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/species-search/details/?id=583>, accessed 6 Apr. 2023.
- ^[11] DES, 'Species profile—*Crocodylus johnstoni* (Australian freshwater crocodile', *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (NCA) status.
- ^[12] DES, 'Species profile—*Crocodylus johnstoni* (Australian freshwater crocodile', Class.
- ^[13] Environomics Future Science Platform, 'Redefining life expectancy and maximum lifespan for wildlife management', *CSIRO* (14 Oct. 2020), Image Caption, <https://research.csiro.au/environomics/redefining-life-expectancy-and-maximum-lifespan-for-wildlife-management/>, accessed 25 May 2023.
- ^[14] Crocodiles of the World, 'Conservation Status', *Crocodiles of the World* (28 Dec. 2021), Population Estimates, <https://www.crocodiles-of-the-world.co.uk/conservation/conservation-status/>, accessed 25 May 2023.
- ^[15] Billabong Sanctuary, 'Freshwater Crocodile', *Billabong Sanctuary* (6 Mar. 2018), How are they different from estuarine crocodiles?, <https://www.billabongsanctuary.com.au/freshwater-crocodile/>, accessed 25 May 2023.