

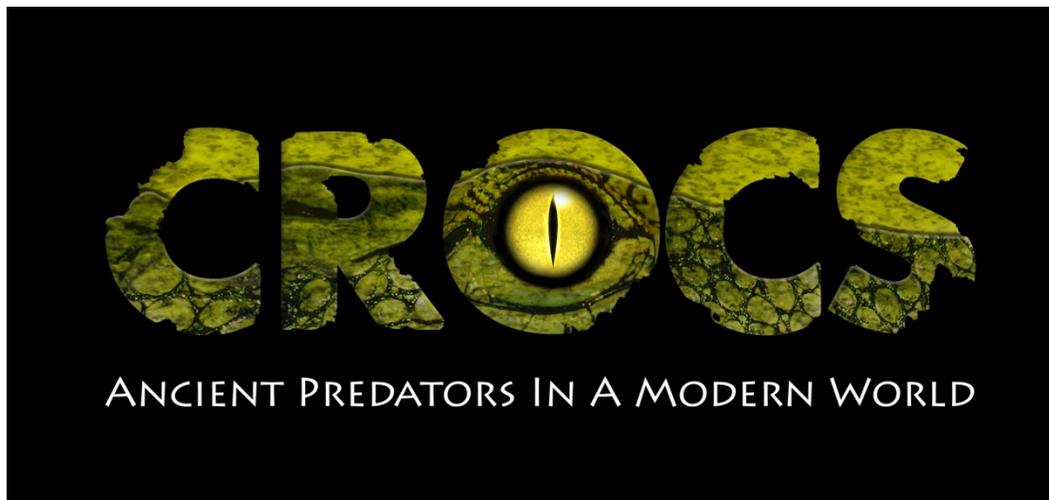
# MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Live Crocs in the Exhibition

Part of the [CROCS: Ancient Predators in a Modern World](#) exhibition

Hosted by MOR February 25 – September 2017.



Crocs have flourished for more than 200 million years, and the group once included a rich diversity of specialized forms from galloping land predators and jumping insect eaters to pug-nosed herbivores and dolphin-like pelagic hunters. All modern crocodilians are built for life at the water's edge. These stealthy aquatic predators have rugged bodies, keen senses, and incredible strength.

But crocs are more than just brutes, they lead intricate social lives. They communicate with a range of pips, grunts, hisses, bellows, and subtle changes in body posture. They battle over territories, engage in lengthy courtship rituals, and provide their young with tender parental care. Living crocodilians range from diminutive forest dwellers to behemoths that eat wildebeests, buffaloes, and occasionally people. In a human-dominated world, the future of crocodilians depends upon our willingness to share space with large predators.

To schedule a field trip, [visit our website to complete the online request form.](#)

## American Alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*)



*American alligators thrive in the swamps of many southern states.*

This widespread and successful species inhabits swamps, marshes, rivers, and lakes in the Southeastern United States. American alligators are serious about motherhood. The female builds a nest by scraping together leaves and other debris, buries her eggs inside the mound, and stands guard for two months until the babies hatch. Hatchling alligators may stay in their mother's protection for months or even years! This diorama features a re-created alligator nest at water's edge. The nest is guarded by a life-like model mother. A crèche of live hatchlings swim and interact in the adjacent pool.

Photo Credit: McDonald Wildlife Photography

**African Slender-snouted Crocodile (*Mecistops cataphractus*)**



*This narrow-nosed crocodile hunts fish and other prey underwater.*

This medium-sized crocodile inhabits rivers that run through the tropical rainforests of Central Africa. These nimble predators hunt fish and are famous for climbing into low. An agile swimmer that does its hunting underwater, the namesake nose of the slender-snouted crocodile is well adapted to move quickly while catching fish, which form the bulk of this endangered animal's diet. They often perch on elevated logs above water, dropping into the pool at the first sign of danger.

Image Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

**Dwarf Crocodile (*Osteolaemus tetraspis*)**



*Dwarf crocodiles are among the smallest crocodile species on Earth today.*

These shy forest dwellers spend much of the day hidden in earthen burrows, and emerge after dark to search for food. Unlike most crocodylians, dwarf crocs do much of their hunting on land—prowling the forest at night, far from water. The status of this species in the wild is largely unknown.

Photo Credit: McDonald Wildlife Photography

## Siamese Crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*)



*Siamese crocodiles like this one are gravely threatened in the wild.*

Siamese crocodiles are among the most endangered crocodylian species, and may be functionally extinct throughout much of their range. Conservation groups are scrambling to save the last wild populations of Siamese crocs, which are threatened by habitat loss and construction of hydroelectric dams.

Photo Credit: McDonald Wildlife Photography