

Executive Summary

The revised Action Plan for Crocodiles, provides concise summaries of the current status and recent information for all 23 species of crocodylian. The Action Plan supersedes the 1992 *Crocodiles: An Action Plan for their Conservation*. It reflects the ongoing activities of the Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) membership, provides some guidance and describes priorities for immediate actions that address the most pressing current problems in crocodylian conservation.

An introductory section provides general information on crocodylian biology and outlines some general principles that are being applied to their conservation. The ecological and economical importance of crocodylians in their wetland habitats is noted. Conservation of wild crocodylian populations has numerous spin-off benefits for other species and local human communities. The application of sustainable use to crocodylian conservation is explained, and descriptions of national programs that demonstrate both the application and the effectiveness of these methods are included. The examples of the American alligator in the USA, the Nile crocodile in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the Saltwater crocodile in Australia and Papua New Guinea are particularly compelling.

This revised Action Plan provides the first application of the new 1994 *IUCN Red List Categories* to crocodylian status assessment. In general, the assessments made using the 1994 categories agree with previous assessments, but in several cases the application of the new objective and quantitative criteria has drawn our attention to some significant gaps in our information and the need for a reconsideration of species status. The Critically Endangered status of *Crocodylus mindorensis*, *Crocodylus siamensis*, *Alligator sinensis* and *Crocodylus intermedius* is confirmed and these remain the highest priority for action. Three species, *Tomistoma schlegelii*, *Crocodylus moreletii* and *Crocodylus cataphractus* were evaluated to be Data Deficient. New information suggests *Tomistoma* may be Vulnerable and *C. moreletii* Lower Risk, conservation dependent. The application of the quantitative criteria and new information on status reassures us that *Crocodylus rhombifer*, *Gavialis gangeticus* and *Melanosuchus niger* are all showing slow recovery but remain Endangered. The maintenance of ongoing conservation action on these species should continue their recovery. *Crocodylus acutus*, *Crocodylus palustris* and *Osteolaemus tetraspis* are evaluated as Vulnerable. The remaining ten species of crocodylian are assessed to have a Lower Risk of extinction. This group includes the major species appearing in trade and subject to sustainable use and management.

The revised Action Plan provides an updated set of action recommendations for each species. The recommended actions include: status surveys, the identification and protection of important populations and habitat; the enhancement of conservation and management capacity of national authorities; the development of national management plans for crocodylian conservation; captive breeding and restocking programs; and the development of economic incentives for crocodylian conservation through well-regulated sustainable use. Those high priority projects applying to the most endangered species are analyzed and ranked as a guide to immediate needs.

The plan provides government agencies, management authorities, funding agencies, researchers, non-governmental organizations and other conservation interests with basic information and concrete recommendations for action that will promote the conservation of crocodilians and their habitats.