

Preliminary Observations on the Rearing of Crocodiles in Captivity at Federal College of Wildlife Management, New Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the potentials of rearing crocodiles (particularly Nile crocodiles) in captivity. The study area was Federal College of Wildlife Management, New Bussa, Niger State. Two Nile crocodiles (male and female) were procured in 2000 and kept in pond constructed for that purpose. Reproduction did not take place from 2000 to 2003 probably because no nesting medium was provided. Sand of about 30cm in depth was provided before breeding season in 2004 to serve as nesting medium. This probably resulted in the laying and hatching of eggs in 2004 (4 hatchlings), 2006 (9 hatchlings) and 2007 (9 hatchlings). Mortality was recorded among three (3) of 2004 hatchlings and two (2) of the 2006 hatchlings. The total population of crocodiles under captivity in the College stands at 19 (adult: 2; young: 17). This is an indication that with good management, crocodiles can multiply well in captivity. Feeding, proper design of pond and housing unit and handling are critical issues requiring adequate consideration in order to optimize the potential from crocodile farming.

Keywords: Crocodile, management, rearing, captivity, hatchlings.