

Human–crocodile interactions in La Encrucijada biosphere reserve, Chiapas, Mexico

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Abstract: In the last 9 years, the La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve has presented interactions between Humans and Crocodilians limiting a harmonious coexistence in wetlands. Five types of interactions were identified as the result of environmental and anthropogenic factors: 1) Risk crocodilians, 2) Predation of domestic fauna, 3) Illegal hunting, 4) Non-fatal incidents and 5) Fatal incidents. Each case is verified and attended with planning and programming of activities from 3 to 18 working days using cars, boats, outboard motor, networks, ropes, traps, electric tapes, GPS, field notebook, camera, among others. From 2011 to 2019, 133 reports have been documented, of which 2 correspond to fatal cases, 10 non-fatal cases and the rest were cases at risk, captivity, illegal hunting and rescued crocodilians. Most cases occur between March and July, and were originated from hunting, swimming, diving, fishing and neglect of people. With a communitarian and technical work group, care and prevention strategies have been designed to raise awareness among residents, placing signs, promoting sustainable use alternatives, and capacitating community groups. In addition, the possibility of creating natural physical barriers as protection measures, generating agreements between fisheries cooperatives for the management of their fishing waste, management of domestic fauna, promotion of culture of prevention, as well as avoiding the capture of wild specimens for sale as pets, is being evaluated. We recommend to continue monitoring wild populations of crocodilians in La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve.

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