

Strategies for care and conservation of crocodilians product of the human–crocodile conflict in natural protected areas of Chiapas, Mexico

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Abstract: There are reports of incidents with crocodilians since the 1940s in Natural Protected Areas (NPAs) in Chiapas, Mexico; despite crocodilians coexist with human populations, interactions have increased due to human recreation, habitat decline, traditional fishing (diving), poor management of domestic fauna, and hunting among others. The attention to the interaction is validated by telephone and they are officially reported to the environmental authorities. Depending on the type of interaction, the planning and programming of activities is carried out for: Diagnosis of the case, monitoring actions, capture, handling and transfer of risk specimens, data collection, photographic registration and environmental education. From 2011 to 2019, 40 reports of interactions were attended at the La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve; in 2014 and 2015, 7 for the Puerto Arista Estuarine Sanctuary; and in 2017 and 2018, 10 for the Sumidero Canyon National Park and one for the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve. The given attention was: a) sighting of risk crocodilians, b) predation of domestic fauna, c) hunting and illegal exploitation, and d) interactions with the humans (non-fatal and fatal). As a result, it has been possible to generate a Program of Action for the Conservation of Species (PACE: Crocodylia) and a Protocol of Attention to Human-Crocodilian Contingencies (PACH) as a baseline, which allows the formation of community and technical groups in Natural Protected Areas (NPAs) in conjunction with Environmental offices from the three levels of government, NGOs, and the academy; to train community members in the prevention, attention to interactions, crocodilian surveys, signage to raise awareness and avoid incidents, to generate alternatives for sustainable management and exploitation at the community level promoting gender equity as well as research to conserve crocodilians in the wetlands of the Chiapas NPAs.

Keywords: Human-crocodile conflict, NPAs, Community, Chiapas

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