

# National survey of Orinoco Crocodile (*Crocodylus intermedius*) in Venezuela: final report

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**Abstract:** The main goal of the national survey of the Orinoco crocodile in Venezuela was to determine the abundance, density and size class structure, in high-priority locations, including geographical places where the possible presence of this species has been informed, but there are not recent available data. The study area was selected based on historical reports on literature, comparing the first report by Goldshalk and Sosa (1978) and places suggested by Balaguera-Reyna *et. al.* (2017); as priority areas for conservation of the Orinoco crocodile. The surveys were carried out in 14 localities. Some of these localities were separated in small survey areas (transects) due to its large aquatic surface resulting in 36 surveyed areas, some of them were visited more than one time due to the necessity of preliminary approach as to evaluate logistic matters, like figuring out the feasibility of carrying out the survey the navigable extension, camping location areas, and identification of local collaborators. About more than 1,000 km of both river and creeks banks were surveyed, and the data is reported on the basis of water surface. There were observed 260 Orinoco crocodiles on 515.10 km of river navigated. All individuals were classified in size classes, Class II: 33; Class III: 36; Class IV: 35; Class V: 83; only eyes 73 and 56 hatchling. Three important discoveries have been found, the first is the establishment of a third reproductive population in Estero de Camaguán, Guárico state at Santa Rosa's ranch, as a result of the reintroduction program, particularly from those liberated on the period 2008-2009; the second is, the increase number of nest in Capanaparo River, and finally the confirmation that Orinoco crocodile is present in Zuata and Quitaparo Rivers. This study has been made possible thanks to the support of the Crocodile Specialists Group (CSG) of the World Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), CrocFest and Río Verde, as well as of all the local inhabitants, guides and boat drivers who have supported the field work.

**Keywords:** Survey, Orinoco crocodile, *Crocodylus intermedius*, Venezuela

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