

Individual identification of *Crocodylus intermedius* (Orinoco caiman) using pattern of tail dark spot

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Abstract: The Conservation Action Plan of the Orinoco crocodile (*Crocodylus intermedius*) among its activities is the release or reinforcement of natural populations with captive-bred specimens, by monitoring these specimens in their natural habitat their adaptability is assessed, but an identification system is necessary to recognize the individuals when they are recaptured. 543 Orinoco caiman were photographed and analyzed, generating 464 Swanepoel codes and 537 Boucher *et. al.* codes based on the dark spot pattern of the scales on the right side of the tails. Both methods yielded high code values, however, the one developed by Boucher *et. al.*, with a 98.90% differentiation of the analyzed specimens, worked better. The study confirms that using the method of spots in the tail of crocodiles is an effective tool in identifying individuals.

Keywords: Orinoco crocodile, *Crocodylus intermedius*, Individual identification, Scales pattern, Venezuela

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