

# Education for Conservation: “DEMYSTIFYING CROCODILIANS IN AMERICA”

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***Abstract:*** Being able to touch a crocodile and walk among adult specimens may seem to some people to be a daring action, an extreme adventure, but it is not. Crocodiles are not the gigantic and bloodthirsty man-eaters that some movies have led us to believe, nor are they the hungry and aggressive predators that devour huge herbivores that documentaries show us. Crocodilians in America and many of them throughout the world spend their lives feeding on fish, crustaceans, birds, and small mammals. In the past 40 years it has been possible to demystify the shark, the wolves, the bears, and the felines, it is time to understand and put crocodiles in their true place, as a top predator, yes, it is, but in its ecosystemic function is not to control human overpopulation. It is our task to implement strategies to learn to coexist with crocodiles where possible, prevent conflicts where there is a greater intensity of interaction and have management programs for adult specimens, where and when necessary; but all the strategies to implement will be impossible if the human population considers them little less than man-eating dragons. Let's demystify crocodilians.

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