

## **Freshwater Crocodile** **(*Crocodylus johnstoni*)**

**National Status :** Not listed

**State Status :** Not listed (NT)

**Description :**

Freshwater crocodiles are truly awesome animals. These efficient, carnivorous predators grow up to three metres in length. They have a streamlined body that is heavily armoured with bony plates, short legs with clawed, webbed feet, and a long, slender snout allowing them to sideswipe rapidly underwater to catch fast-moving prey such as fish, crustaceans, insects, reptiles, amphibians and birds. Most hunting is done at night. They are essentially harmless to humans.



**Distribution :**

Found throughout the sub-coastal, northern margins of Australia from Derby in the west to Townsville in the east.

**Habitat :**

Freshwater rivers and billabongs.

**General :**

The crocodile has an evolutionary history spanning 200 million years and exhibits the most advanced maternal care of all living reptiles. The female lays about 20 eggs between August and November in a nest-mound excavated in sandbanks. The sex of the young is determined by nest temperature. A steady temperature of 32 degrees Celsius results in the birth of males, but if the temperature departs from this then most of the young are females. The powerful, fearsome jaws that are usually used to snatch live prey are now used to carefully transport the tiny hatchlings to the water's edge. Individuals probably live for about 40-60 years, though they may survive for up to 100 years.

**Threats :**

Because they are 'top order' predators, crocs are dependent upon healthy waterways.