

What you need to know about ESTUARINE CROCODILES



Photo by Mendis Tan

What are they?

The Estuarine Crocodile has a long snout and a broad, muscular tail. Its body is yellow, olive or grey with black checker-spots, and white underneath. While many people confuse the Malayan Water Monitor lizard with the Estuarine Crocodile due to their similar characteristics, what sets them apart are the ridges on the crocodile's tail.

Distribution & Habitat

Estuarine Crocodiles are known to swim freely in the Straits of Johor, and they feed and rest in mangroves and freshwater bodies. They have been spotted at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and the northern coasts of Singapore.

Behaviour

This amphibious creature spends most of the day basking at the water's edge or concealed among vegetation. It hunts mainly at night in the water for fish and other small animals, but also scavenges on carrion (the flesh of dead animals). Its eggs are laid in a specially constructed nest of vegetation and are guarded by the female.

Are our green spaces safe to visit?

Estuarine Crocodiles are usually found in the water or at the mudflats away from visitor routes. Warning signs and advisory notices have been posted at areas where these animals are most often seen. Visitors should heed these signs, which advise the public to stay on the visitor routes and not venture off the designated paths.

Did you know?

The species is internationally classified as endangered due to the destruction of its habitats, over-hunting for its hide (valued as quality leather for making shoes and handbags) and meat, and human persecution. Sadly, hatchlings are sometimes sold as pets.

What should you do if you encounter a crocodile at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve?

- ✓ **DO stay calm and back away slowly.**
- ✓ **DO NOT approach, provoke or feed the animal.**
- ✓ **DO call the Reserve Information Counter at 6794 1401 if you need assistance.**

