

## SIAMESE CROCODILE

By

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There are three existing members of Siamese crocodile in Thailand and they are to be found in the North and South of the country. The two common species are the Siamese crocodile (*Crocodilus siamensis*) and the Estuarine or Brackish-water crocodile (*Crocodilus porosus*). The last one is very rare while the Malay gharial (*Rhynchosuchus*) inhabits South Thailand and the Malay Peninsula.

### Siamese or Fresh-water crocodile

(*Crocodilus Siamensis*)

The Siamese crocodile's homes are in Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia but he differs from his neighbours in that he has a broad and short snout consisting of four large scales behind the head, iris black vertical and he appears to be an exclusively fresh-water specie thriving in lakes and marshes. He measures from 12 to 14 feet which is considered to be a large size at present for this specie. February and May are the pairing seasons. The female lays 30 to 40 eggs in the first litter and after she gets older 50 to 60 eggs are to be found concealed in the dry grass on the marshy ground of the approximate size of those of a goose, and invested with a hard white shell. During this internment she becomes fierce and attacks her rival. A specie of the crocodile from Paknampho in North Thailand was recorded by Luang Ananda of the Thai Fisheries Department in 1932 as reaching a length of 13 feet. I have never heard of this specie to attack human beings.

### Estuarine or Brackish - water crocodile

(*Crocodile Porosus*)

Resembling its compatriot in its pale olive color, conspicuously spotted with black, it may be at once distinguished by its longer and more slender snout, as well as by the presence of only four teeth in each interior jawbone of the adult. The present specie generally, if not invariably, inhabits the tidal portions of the

rivers, from whence it descends to the sea where it has been observed floating at considerable distance from land. This estuarine is partially of marine habit. It can be found abundantly in the lower courses of rivers in South Thailand and the Malay Peninsula. The record length for this crocodile is 22 feet. One shot in Bandon, South Thailand by Mr. Wergini in 1924 measure  $18\frac{1}{2}$  feet while the other one I brought alive to Bangkok from Nakhon Si Thammarat also in South Thailand in 1948 is 17 feet long. This crocodile appears to be one of the most formidable members of its kind, being exceedingly prone to attack human beings especially when the native goes bathing in the river.

In South Thailand crocodiles are frequently captured in two ways as follows:—

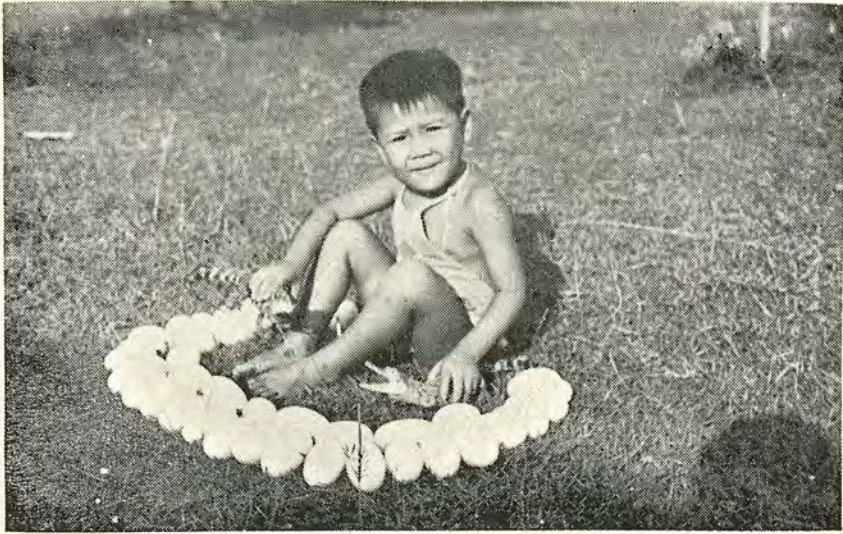
(a) For the medium or small size, the native hunts at night by boat with searchlight and shot gun. He harpoons the middle of the tail to prevent the skin from becoming spoiled. In the day time the crocodile hides himself in the marshy land.

(b) A large hook with bait and line, is laid overnight in the water and made fast, native fashion, by a bunch of fine cords. These cords becoming fixed between the interstice of the reptile's teeth, are saved from being bitten through when it is captured.

### Malay Gharial

(*Rhynchosuchus*)

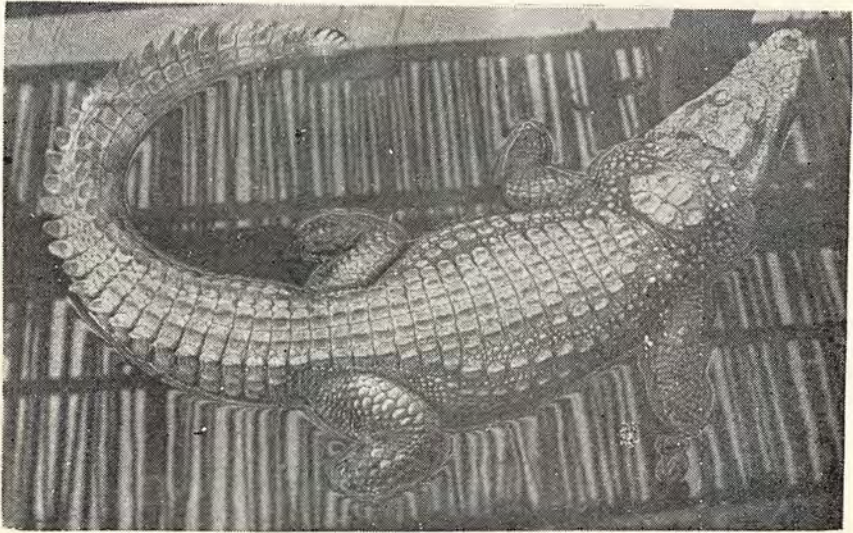
This very long and slender - snout crocodile inhabits South Thailand and Malay Peninsula. The color of this crocodile is olive above with dark spots or bars and its length may be 10 to 12 feet. In habits this specie is probably very similar to the Indian gharial. This gharial is known to the Malay as buaya - jinjulung, or long snouted crocodile, but it is a very rare reptile, only a few have even heard of its existence. This crocodile would appear to be essentially a fresh - water animal and it is said by the natives to frequent the swamps and marshy lands on the banks of the river. I have collected two Malay gharial skins from Pattani in South Thailand in 1935 and 1949. The skins have bony armour on the belly.



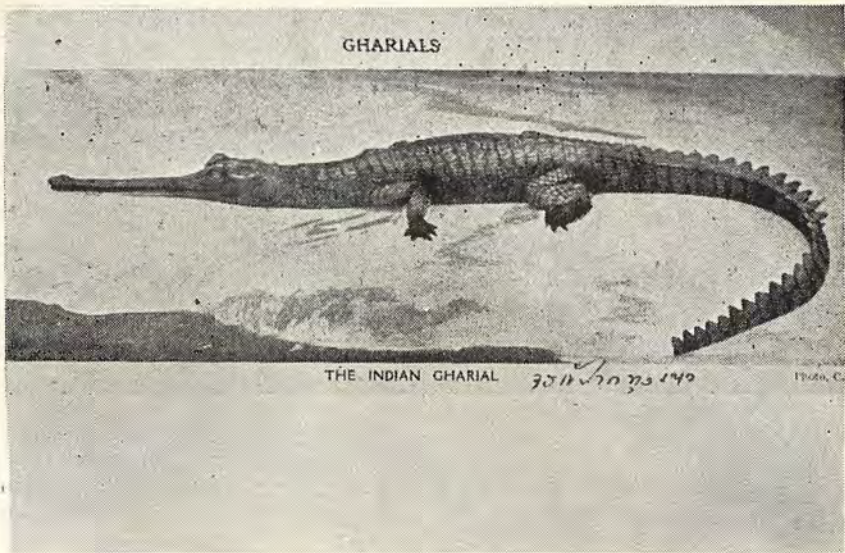
*Rows of crocodile eggs and the two newly hatched around the author's son*



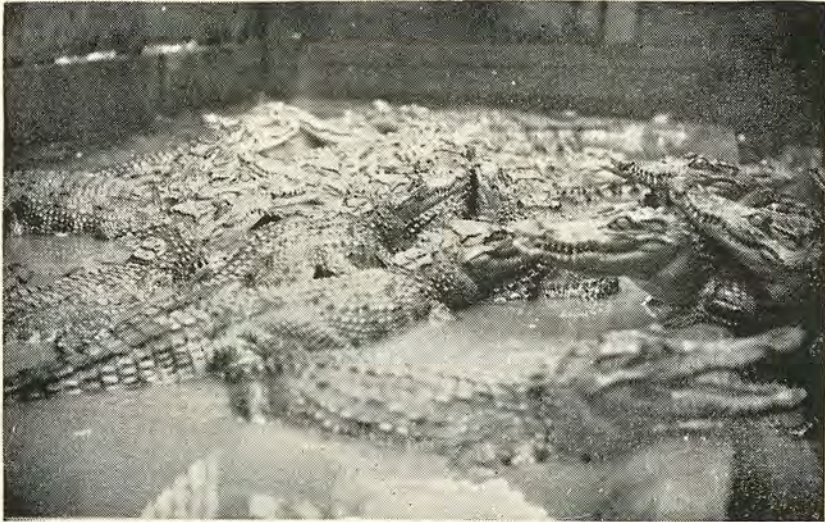
*An injured 17-foot Brackish Water crocodile (C. Porosus)*



*Albino, a specimen of C. Siamensis kept at Y. Siah Farm*



*The Indian Gharial*



*A number belonging to C. Porosus, a native of Thailand, are splashing in their feeding tank*



*A 17-foot crocodile from Nakhon Si Thamrat is being alighted from truck by a team of coolies*



*The head of a lifeless crocodile and the author's son*