Croc Fruit Eaters

Written by Administrator Wednesday, 07 August 2013 06:06 -

Croc fruit eaters, according to New Scientist 30 July 2013 and *Journal of Zoology*, doi.org/m9x. Thomas Rainwater of the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Charleston, South Carolina, and colleagues have carried out a study of the diets of alligators living in the Florida Everglades and found they included many types of fruits. They also carried out a survey of the literature on "crocodilian diet, foraging ecology, digestive physiology and movement patterns". The research team reported: "We found evidence of frugivory in 13 of 18 (72.2%) species for which dietary information was available, indicating this behavior is widespread among the Crocodylia. Thirty-four families and 46 genera of plants were consumed by crocodilians. Fruit types consumed by crocodilians varied widely; over half (52.1%) were fleshy fruits".

The crocodiles may be using the fruit seeds as "gastroliths" to help grind other food, or they may simply have fruit seeds in their stomach from swallowing a fruit eating animal, but there is now evidence they deliberately eat fruit. According to New Scientist: "Last year a researcher working in south-east Asia reported seeing a wild Siamese crocodile tucking into a watermelon".

As crocodiles and alligators roam far and wide they may help disperse seeds by regurgitating seeds or depositing them in their droppings, but this has never been investigated because, according to the research team, crocodiles "are generally assumed to be obligate carnivores incapable of digesting vegetable proteins and polysaccharides". The researchers concluded: "Crocodilian saurochory (seed dispersal by reptiles) offers a fertile ground for future research".

Link: New Scientist

Editorial Comment: Genesis 1 tells us all crocodilians started as vegetarian, (as did all creatures), so we shouldn't be surprised to still see evidence of this in any living animal group. But by the days of Job several hundred years after Noah, a huge crocodilian like monster with savage teeth and spikes etc had become a terrible threat to man. (See Job 41).

Life may have begun eco-friendly but Genesis 1-20, records life's many forms did not stay strictly vegetarian, and after Noah's day, many resorted to eating meat and men, when life became a struggle for existence due to the degenerating post fall, post flood and post ice environment. Crocs are still a threat to man, but it seems they are still a benefit to fruit trees as the seed goes through their digestive tracts, then deposited on new ground, complete with a fresh supply of fertiliser. Such a mutual help animal/plant system works well only if all

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contributors are put in place together. If both the creatures and the mutual beneficial system had to evolve by chance, many plants would have died out waiting for their seed dispersers to evolve. In fact, seed dispersal reminds us that in the beginning God set up a functioning ecosystem with plants and animals interacting in a cooperative way to keep it going. (Ref. reptiles, ecology, diet)

Evidence News 7 August 2013