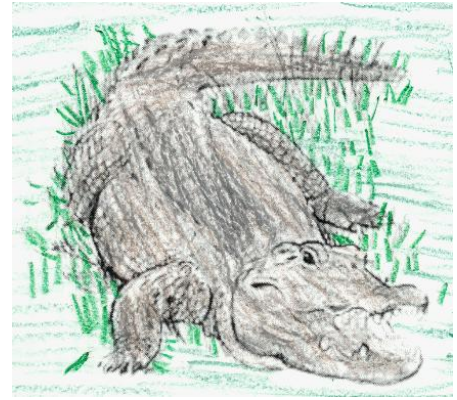


# AMERICAN CROCODILE

by

**DADREN**



Scientific name: *alligator mississippiensis*

Classification: reptile

Habitat: Alligators can be found in rivers, swamps, bogs, lakes, ponds, creeks, canals, and bayous. Alligators can tolerate some salt water and have been spotted in marshes as well.

Size: Males – length to 15 feet; weight 400 pounds. Females – length to 8 feet; weight 160 pounds.

Food: Alligators eat just about anything including lizards, fish, snakes, turtles, small mammals, birds, crustaceans, and even small alligators. They hunt for prey underwater and often swallow their meal whole.

Young: Females build their nests in marshy areas and along shorelines. The temperature of the nest determines the sex of the hatchlings. The mother stays close to her nest to protect it. When the young hatch, they peep and the mother helps the hatchlings out of the nest and carries them in her mouth to the water.

Status: First listed as an endangered species in 1967, the American alligator was removed from the endangered species list in 1987 after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pronounced a complete recovery of the species.

Facts:

1. Alligators are living fossils that can be tracked back 230 million years.
2. Alligators can live 35 to 50 years in the wild. In captivity, 60 to 80 years.
3. The American alligator is the largest reptile in North America.
4. American alligators hibernate during the winter in burrows (or dens) that they construct, but may occasionally emerge during brief spells of warmer weather.
5. Alligators do not feed during the cooler months.
6. They can easily last the winter on their energy reserves.
7. Adult alligators can survive freezing conditions if they are in water.
8. Alligators have good binocular vision.
9. They can stay underwater 45-60 minutes.
10. Female alligators are territorial and will guard and defend their nests.

