

The American Crocodile

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Credit: U.S. Department of Agriculture

American crocodiles are long, scaly reptiles. They live in watery areas known as wetlands. In the United States, this kind of crocodile lives in the Everglades. That is a swampy section in the state of Florida.

The Everglades is an ecosystem. An ecosystem is a place where animals and plants live together. Any change to an ecosystem may affect all the wildlife that live in it.

In 1975, the American crocodile was listed as an *endangered* animal. Endangered animals are close to disappearing forever. One reason why the American crocodiles were in danger was that people were moving into the reptiles' ecosystem. People built homes and businesses on Everglades land. That made it harder for the crocodiles to find food and lay eggs.

People who were worried about the crocodiles and other wildlife in the Everglades worked to pass laws to protect the ecosystem. Today, there is good news. Scientists say there are more than a thousand American crocodiles living in southern Florida. The laws are helping the crocodiles survive.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where in the United States does the American crocodile live?

- A) the Everglades
- B) the desert
- C) the Great Lakes

2. What was one important cause of the American crocodile becoming endangered?

- A) People were moving into the crocodiles' ecosystem.
- B) The temperature was changing in the crocodiles' ecosystem.
- C) The crocodiles did not want to live in the Everglades anymore.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"In 1975, the American crocodile was listed as an endangered animal. Endangered animals are close to disappearing forever. One reason why the American crocodiles were in danger was that people were moving into the reptiles' ecosystem. People built homes and businesses on Everglades land. That made it harder for the crocodiles to find food and lay eggs."

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can you draw?

- A) In order to survive, crocodiles need to move away from the Everglades.
- B) In order to survive, crocodiles need to live near humans.
- C) In order to survive, crocodiles need to be able to find food and lay eggs.

4. The article states that people have passed laws to protect the Everglades. These laws are helping the American crocodiles to survive. What do these laws most likely say?

- A) They might force people to give food to American crocodiles in the Everglades.
- B) They might stop people from building homes in the Everglades.
- C) They might allow people to pick certain plants and fruit in the Everglades.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A) American crocodiles were endangered because people moved into their ecosystem, but new laws are helping them survive.
- B) American crocodiles are reptiles that once lived in Florida, but that have disappeared forever.
- C) An ecosystem is a place where animals and plants live together, and where any change might affect all the wildlife that lives in it.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"An ecosystem is a place where animals and plants live together. Any change to an ecosystem may affect all the wildlife that live in it."

What does the word "wildlife" most likely mean?

- A) American crocodiles
- B) animals and plants
- C) swamps and wetlands

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The American crocodiles were close to disappearing forever, _____ people decided to help protect their ecosystem.

- A) so
- B) because
- C) but

8. An ecosystem is a place where animals and plants live together. If there is a change to an ecosystem, what might happen?

9. When people moved into the Everglades ecosystem, how was the American crocodile affected?

10. The article says that people have passed laws to protect the Everglades. Why is protecting the Everglades important to helping the American crocodiles survive? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
