

Conservation

PROJECTO VENEZOLANO SOBRE COCODRILOS (VENEZUELAN CROCODILE PROJECT)

Hoy en dia existe en Venezuela un lugar destinado a servir como centro de investigacion y demonstracion de la Naturaleza: es el Parque Loefling (Puerto Ordaz), el cual se utilizara como sitio donde se efectuara un proceso educativo sobre la interpretacion de la naturaleza y los ciclos biologicos que en ella se cumplen. Uno de los intereses fundamentales de este parque es fomentar trabajos cientificos dirigidos e estudiantes de educacion media. Diez hectareas en estado semivirgen se han comprometido para esta experiencia, donde se encuentran algunos animales autoctonos de la region, representativos de la fauna Guayanesa y sus alrededores. Entre dichos animales esta Crocodylus intermedius, llamado en nuestro medio "Caiman del Orinoco," que fue victimo del rios. La historia de los ejemplares que se tienen en el Parque Loefling es la siguiente: Por los años 1959-1960, fueron recogidos en el Delta del Orinoco 4 cocodrilos (2 hembras y 2 machos) que se trasladaron a un sitio llamado Macagua, cercano a Ciudad Guayana, y mas tarde a una laguna ubicada en el Parque Chachamay. Durante varios años las crias se perdian. En el año 1974 las 2 hembras dieron un total de 56 crias. En el mismo año se escapo uno de los machos progenitores. De los recien nacidos que fueron transladados al Parque Loefling se escaparon 31 y murieron 7 quedando tan solo 18. Luego murio el otro macho progenitor pero despues de haber prenado a un cocodrilo hambra. Las crias resultantes se recogieron en abril de 1976. De 8 retonos murieron dos. En el presente contamos con 2 hembras progenitoras, 18 individuos de la primera cria (en los que no se ha determinado el sexo) y 5 machos y 1 hembra de la segunda cria, lo cual totaliza 26 ejemplares. Se ha observado que el desove ocurre en el

mes de febrero y necesitan arena para que esto ocurra. Actualmente se alimentan a base de carne (bofe) una vez a la semana.

Para el proximo año se lanea a expandir las facilidades para N habilitar una procion destinada a la reproduccion y cria de los ejemplares disponibles, que eventualmente se utilizaran para repoblar las areas donde los cocodrilos antes fueron comunes.

The Parque Loefling (Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela) is being developed as a center for investigation and wildlife demonstration. An educational program is being developed in order to teach an understanding of wildlife and ecological principles. A fundamental interest at the park is to direct scientific studies carried out by high school students. Ten hectares of the park are in a semi-virgin state and will be used for educational purposes. In this area have been released representatives of the fauna of the Venezuelan Guayana and the surrounding areas. Among these animals are Crocodylus intermedius, called in this area "Caiman del Orinoco", a species which was the victim of extermination in recent years and is now seldom found in our rivers. The history of these crocodiles is as follows: In the years 1959-1960 four crocodiles (two males and two females) were collected in the Orinoco Delta, and were taken to a nearby site called Macagua. They were later transferred to a lagoon in the Parque Chachamay (which includes the new Parque Loefling). For some years the broods were lost. In 1974 the two females produced a total of 56 young. The same year one of the adult males escaped. Of the hatchlings that were transferred to the Parque Loefling 31 escaped and 7 died leaving only 18. Later the other adult male died after impregnating



one of the females. The resultant brood was collected in April 1976, and of 8 hatchlings, two died. The current population consists of two adult females, 18 young from the first brood (whose sex we have not determined) and five males and one female from the second brood, a total of 26 individuals. Egg laying has been observed to occur in February and the eggs are laid in sand. The animals are fed on bovine lung once a week.

Next year it is planned to expand the facilities in order to make a sector specifically for the reproduction and raising of available crocodiles. The excess specimens will eventually be used to repopulate areas where these crocodiles used to be common.

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LEGISLATION

Rulemaking actions:

In a final rulemaking issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service (21 July 1977), the giant anole (Anolis roosevelti) has been listed as Endangered and its limited range (mountain forest on the slopes of Mt. Ruaca-Culebra Island, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) has been designated as Critical Habitat.

Threatened status has been proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the eastern indigo snake (Drymarchon corais couperi) (1 August 1977). In recent years local populations of the eastern indigo have suffered a major