

# Identification Notes for wildlife law enforcement

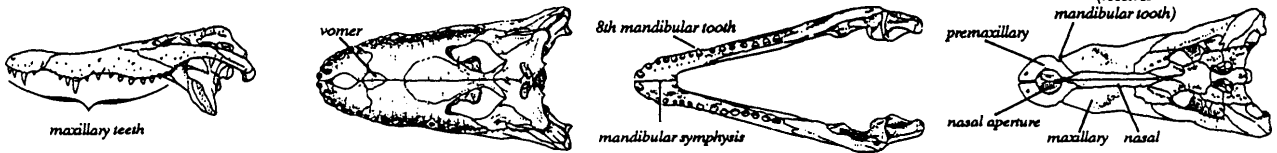
CATEGORY \_\_\_\_\_

**REPTILE**

Scientific Name/s: *Crocodylia*

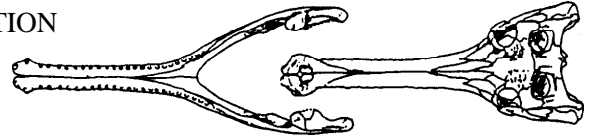
Common Name/s: Alligator, Crocodile, Caiman, Gharial

PROBLEM: Skulls of Crocodylians are often imported as souvenirs.



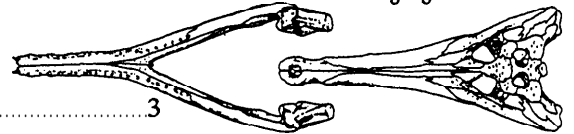
## GUIDE TO PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF CROCODYLIAN SKULLS

1. Nasal bones separated from nasal aperture;  
mandibular symphysis extends to the 15th tooth.....2



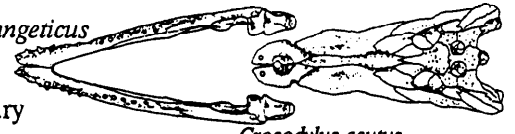
*Gavialis gangeticus*

Nasal bones entering the nasal aperture; mandibular  
symphysis does not extend beyond the 8th tooth.....3



*Tomistoma schlegelii*

2. Nasal bones separated from premaxillary bones;  
27 - 29 maxillary teeth, 25 - 26 mandibular teeth..... *Gavialis gangeticus*



*Gavialis gangeticus*

Nasal bones in contact with premaxillary bones; 20-21 maxillary  
teeth, 18-19 mandibular teeth..... *Tomistoma schlegelii*

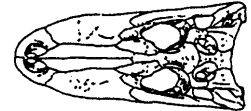
*Crocodylus acutus*

3. Fourth mandibular tooth usually fitting into a notch in the  
maxillary; 16-19 maxillary teeth, 14-15 mandibular teeth.....4



*Osteolaemus tetraspis*

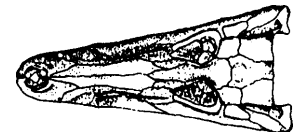
Fourth mandibular tooth usually fitting into a pit in the  
maxillary; 14-20 maxillary teeth, 17-22 mandibular teeth.....5



*Alligator mississippiensis*

4. Nasal bones do not divide nasal aperture. . . . . *Crocodylus* (12 species)

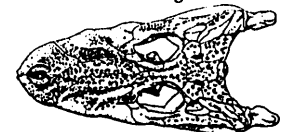
Nasal bones divide nasal aperture..... *Osteolaemus tetraspis*



*Paleosuchus trionatus*

5. Nasal bones do not divide nasal aperture.....6

Bony septum divides nasal aperture . . . . . Alligator (2 species)

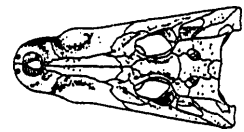


*Melanosuchus niger*

6. Five teeth in premaxillary bone.....7...

Four teeth in premaxillary bone . . . . . *Paleosuchus* (2 species)

7. Vomer exposed on the palate..... *Melanosuchus niger*



*Caiman crocodiles*

Vomer not exposed on palate..... *Caiman* (2 species)

Illustrations from: Mook, C. C. 1921  
Medem, F. 1951

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for wildlife law enforcement

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- - *Crocodylia*

**Common Name/s** Alligator, Crocodile, **Caiman, Gharial**

**REFERENCES**

Medem, F. 1981. Los **crocodylia** de Sur America. Vol. 1. **Los crocodylia** de Colombia. **Colciencias**, Bogota.

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Schmidt, K P. 1928. **Notes** on South American **Caimans**. **Zool. Ser., Field Mus. Nat. Hist.** 12(17):205-231.

Smith, H. M. & R. B. Smith. 1977., Synopsis of the her **epofauna of Mexico**. Vol. 5. Guide to Mexican **amphisbaenians** and **crocodylians**, bibliographic addendum II. John **Johnson**, N. Bennington, Vt.