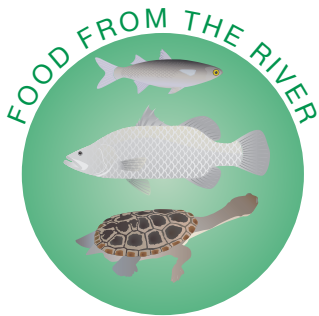# What do crocodiles eat?

**Saltwater crocodiles eat almost anything that comes their way. Crocodiles eat mullet, barramundi, turtles, pigs, wallabies, snakes, sharks and even other crocodiles. We wanted to find out what crocs like to eat and what type of food makes them grow.**[1]

## How did we find out what crocs eat?

With the help of the rangers and Traditional Owners at Kakadu National Park, we took a tiny piece, called a scute, from the tail of 45 crocs caught from the rivers and floodplain billabongs. Most of them were very large – bigger than 2.5m. We looked at the natural chemical signs hidden in the crocodile scutes. All animals have a sign in their bodies that shows us where they've been feeding – from the river, the sea or the land. When crocodiles grow by eating food from the river, their bodies will have the river chemical sign. When crocs eat food from the sea, their bodies will have a saltwater sign. If they eat a mix of these types of food, then their bodies will show a mixed chemical sign.
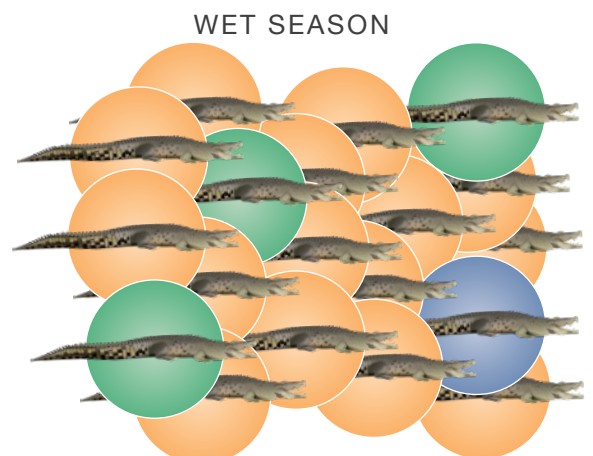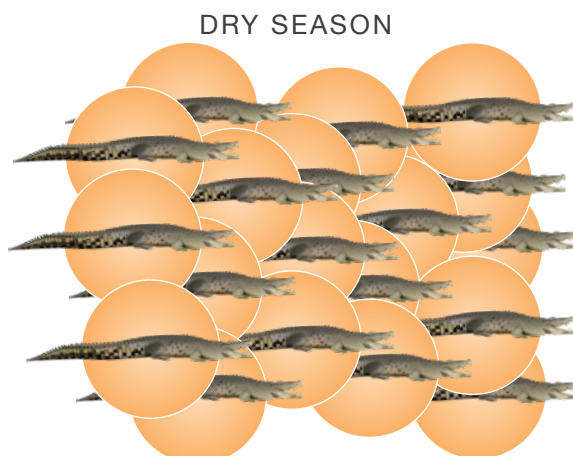


*We took a small piece of the croc's tail to help us find out what they eat.*



FOOD FROM THE RIVER

FOOD FROM THE SEA

FOOD FROM THE LAND

## Can you guess where crocs got most of their food from?

In the dry season, the chemical signs showed that most of the crocodiles were eating food that came from the land. This is the time when they were in the waterholes. But in the wet season, when some crocodiles were moving between the rivers and the sea, a few showed more of a river or saltwater sign in their bodies.

DRY SEASON

WET SEASON



**Most of the big crocs are eating a lot of food from the land, especially during the dry season when they are living in small waterholes. It seems that for many crocs in some Kakadu waterways, pigs might be their favourite meal.**

1. Adame MF, Jardine TD, Fry B, Valdez D, Lindner G, Nadji J, & Bunn S. 2018. Estuarine crocodiles in a tropical coastal floodplain obtain nutrition from terrestrial prey. PLoS ONE 13(6): e0197159. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197159