

**A STUDY ON CROCODILE BEHAVIOR (*Crocodylus  
palustris*) AND PUBLIC VALUE ORIENTATION IN  
ETHIMALE OF MONARAGALA DISTRICT**

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## Abstract

A study was conducted to identify peoples' knowledge, attitudes, practices, believes and practices regarding crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*) in Ethimale area of Monaragala district meanwhile studying the migratory behavior of crocodiles. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 94 individuals including farmers, fishermen and villagers, those who utilize the water body daily. The questionnaire included the questions to determine about crocodiles, their size, population, behavior, habitat, current threats and practices of villagers towards crocodiles. Knowledge and attitudes were measured using knowledge and attitude indices. Direct observations were carried out during seven days period (approximately 6 hours/day). Data was analyzed by using Microsoft Excel and ArcGIS. Peoples used water body for bathing, washing, fishing and fed to livestock and majority spend 30-45 min/day at the water point. Around 81.9% respondents identified that the species of the crocodile as "Hala" and they have observed the crocodiles mainly during morning (6-8 a.m.) and evening (6-7 p.m.). Most of them have seen largest crocodile in between 2-3 m in length. Crocodile eggs were observed during June, July and August months and hatchlings were observed during August to December. Majority of the people observed crocodile migration during July, August and September. There were some believes towards crocodiles and also they had sound knowledge on how to escape from crocodile when captured. Villagers killed crocodiles when trapped to the fishing nets and also there were consumption of crocodile meat. There were very few incidences on direct crocodile attacks to human; however economic damages to villages were high, mainly net damage, loss of captured fish yield and damage to livestock. They have suggested killing, translocation to offending crocodiles. Around 77.6% of the respondents agreed with that crocodiles become threat to fishery or daily uses of the water body. On the other hand respondents believed (73.4%) that the conservation programs for crocodiles are essential. Hence, it can be concluded that human crocodile conflict is under developing stage in this area and necessary to take actions to minimize it before it developed.

Key words - *Crocodylus palustris*, human-crocodile conflict, public value orientation