



Featured Creature



Ian Boggs

American Alligator

Alligator mississippiensis



Animal Type

Vertebrate



Habitat

Freshwater rivers, swamps, marshes, and lakes.



Diet

Carnivores (e.g., fish, birds, frogs and small mammals)



Range

From North Carolina to the Rio Grande in Texas

Modern crocodylians (crocodiles, alligators, and their relatives) have been around for over *200 million years!* But there are only two species of alligators alive today, the Chinese Alligator and the American Alligator.

Male or Female? Temperature decides!

Alligators have **temperature-dependent sex determination**. This means that incubating eggs at 86°F produces mostly females, whereas incubation at 91°F produces mostly males. Temperatures in between those values produce a mixture of female and male alligators!

Fun Fact!

Alligators can hold their breath and stay underwater for *over 12 hours!*

How? They slow down their heart rate and reduce their need for oxygen.

See you later alligator!



Researcher Spotlight



Adrien Arias

PhD Candidate
UC Irvine

 @AdrienArias

What do I study?

I study how the unique body plan and walking mechanics of alligators affect how they use their limb muscles during terrestrial locomotion.

Why is my work important?

We don't know how animals like alligators use their muscles to move, but it's important for understanding how much energy early vertebrates used during walking. Understanding the link between whole-body movement and muscle function requires a comparative and integrative approach.