

Book review

OUBOTER, Paul E. (ed.): Ecological studies on crocodilians in Suriname. Niche segregation and competition in three predators. vi + 139 p. SPB Academic Publishing bv. DM 78, US\$ 45. ISBN 90-5103-131-9.

This booklet of 139 pages presents a comprehensive overview of the occurrence, frequency, and ecological requirements of the three species of crocodilians, *Caiman yacare*, *Paleosuchus trigonatus*, and *Paleosuchus palpebrosus*, in Suriname. The coexistence of three top predators of similar size, food requirements, activity patterns, and nesting behavior challenges ecologists to find arguments for niche segregation or interspecific competition. This study indicates that the species show specific habitat preferences, however these preferences are not explicit enough to separate them. Syntopic occurrence in many areas and the investigated parameters indicate that the species may co-occur over long periods without major problems. Probably population density is not high enough to lead to the exclusion or to the displacement of any of the competitors. The investigated rivers and the connected wetlands are subjected to strong oscillations in water level, which lead to a strong decrease in population density of predators and prey species during the annual dry period. Hydrology may therefore be the limiting factor for the populations allowing the coexistence of several species with the same ecological requirements.

The findings about the three species of crocodilians in Suriname are discussed in a comprehensive way, including information available from other neotropical regions, mainly from Amazonia. A worldwide overview about crocodilians with respect to size, habitat requirements, food and feeding habits, and nesting behavior allows a better understanding of the data presented.

The booklet is interesting also for readers not specialized in crocodilians because of the characterization of the waterbodies. Suriname is one of the countries in South America which has been very little studied. This study provides a comprehensive documentation of available limnological literature. Unfortunately, the price of the book is relatively high.

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