

News Note

Large Crocodile Taken in the Palau islands: by Peter Wilson, Fisheries Management Biologist, U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

On May 4, 1964 around midnight, two Palauan fishermen, Masayuki Arurang, and Jim Skebong, speared and landed a crocodile measuring 14 ft. 10 inches using flashlights and throwing spears in the river that runs in front of the village of Ngeremlengui on the island of Babelthaup. In all, the animal, *Crocodylus porosus*, was speared seven times; once in the throat where he was hit on the first throw, and six times in the base of the tail. Two hours were required to land it and additional help was received from men in the village that were wakened by the excited cries of the fishermen when they first hit the animal with their spears.

Crocodylus porosus is a marine crocodile that is found in the Indian and East Indian region and is famous as a man-eater. Sixteen foot specimens are well known with the maximum known length being 20 feet. *Crocodylus porosus* is probably greater in average size than the largest African species, *Crocodylus niloticus*. The adults of *C. niloticus*, are approximately twelve feet long and the largest known specimen is sixteen feet. This would correspond to a weight of at least a ton.

In the Palau Islands, *C. porosus* is common and can be found in either fresh water streams or in salt water among the limestone islands that are scattered throughout Palau's lagoon.

No accurate records have been kept about the largest specimens landed in Palau, but within the last year, specimens 14 feet 6 inches and 13 feet long were landed by Palauan fishermen. As there is no concentrated fishery for these animals, it is difficult to estimate the size of the local population. No definite deaths have been attributed to crocodiles, but about a year ago a Palauan fisherman was attacked and dragged under water twice before he was finally released.

LITERATURE CITED

Schmita, Karl P. and Inger, Robert E. 1962. Living Reptiles of the World Doubleday and Company, Inc. Garden City, New York.