

## **Cocodrilos de la Laguna del Carpintero**

### ***Crocodiles of the Carpenter Lagoon***

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At last, being able to contribute to the project for the preservation of the species of crocodiles of Carpenter Lagoon, Australian Steve Irwin was in Tampico taking in the beauty that this location offers and to study the behaviour of this species.

Having Carpenter Lagoon as a stage Steve Irwin, known as the Crocodile Hunter from the television series on Animal Planet, held a press conference to announce his participation in the preservation of the Morelet's Crocodiles that inhabit the waters of Carpenter Lagoon.

He was accompanied by Marco A. Lazcano Barrero, Executive Director of 'Friends of Sian Ka'an', Conserving the Natural Inheritance of Quintana Roo; Manuel Carrera, responsible for the project to integrate the population of crocodiles of Tampico; and Alejandro Fierro Cabo, sub-director of Ecological Assistance of Tampico.

First of all, Steve Irwin told how his trips of filming jungle life documentaries throughout the world began when he was a child because his father was a crocodile hunter. He added that nowhere in Asia has he visited situations like this one, which is unique to Tampico where crocodiles and humans live in harmony.

His pleasure of being present in Tampico was demonstrated by the fervor of the people and the enthusiasm with which the people of Mexico responded. Steve Irwin explained that his appearance in Tampico, as well as the other colleagues, is to work towards a solution to identify what is diminishing the crocodile population - how it lives in the lagoon, where it nests - and to find ways of managing a plan to enable the crocodiles to live forever in the region. And for that, this group of experts like Manuel Carrera, Marco Lazcano, and Alejandro will continue the project.

Manuel Carrera continued, stating that he will definitely introduce a way of monitoring the crocodiles of the lagoon to be able to determine when the crocodiles can become a problem and when to take measures to relocate the animals. They will monitor when a crocodile may be a potential aggressive animal towards people and to find a way to relocate it in a sanctuary where it will not be a problem to humans. They are looking for a means to maintain the crocodile population, but still conserve the security of the people and find harmony. It is

not about trying to take the animals out of the lagoon and locate them to another place where they have no contact with humans - only to take those that are considered a potential danger, and sustain a means to conserve the species.

The Crocodile Hunter indicated that the Saurios - the higher order of the food chain - is to protect the many species that inhabit the lagoon and to guarantee that the same support is addressed to the other species that interact with the crocodiles.

After he received information that was sent to him by the City of Tampico, he became interested in it. He said he hopes to return in a few years to enjoy the beach with his daughter Bindi, and his wife Terri.

City authorities informed us that the collaboration of Steve Irwin should not incur a cost to the city. It will be funded by an external contribution that the program has with interest groups of the diverse species of the world programs.

## **Tampico Crocodile Management Plan: Morelet's Crocodile in Laguna del Carpintero By Steve Irwin**

- Human safety always remains the priority and the primary focus of the plan.
- Monthly crocodile assessment by an authorised expert to determine:
  - Potential crocodile/human conflicts or likely areas for conflict
  - Crocodile social structure of the lagoon
  - Individual crocodile territories and population hierarchy
  - Reproduction and recruitment into the population
  - Human/crocodile confrontations including interference of crocodile nests, feeding of animals and injuries to animals and humans
  - Other wildlife
- All aspects of the monitoring will be documented.
- Design and construction of a crocodile nesting zone. This would incorporate corridors of water along tunnels, canals and pipes to a fenced safe area where females can bask, submerge, feed and feel secure close to their nest sites. This would be a major and popular destination for both locals and tourists.
- Provide islands in the lagoon for basking sites close to popular people areas so that crocodile viewing is achieved. Existing basking sites are a good guide as to where these islands should be constructed.

- Identify and document, monitor and if necessary capture and remove any crocodile exhibiting nuisance or aggressive behaviour towards humans or human activities.
- Crocodiles should only be captured when absolutely necessary. Capturing creates a negative experience that has the potential to alter the crocodiles' behaviour.
- Crocodile reproduction should be encouraged, as the lagoon could easily accommodate 100 adults (animals longer than 1.5 metres).
- After all developments are completed, Steve Irwin will inspect and reassess the situation within the lagoon.
- Other important issues include the promotion and protection of other wildlife around the lagoon, including the Green Iguanas and the many species of wild bird. This will help create an entire wilderness and wildlife experience for all visitors to the lagoon.
- All facilities and attractions surrounding the lagoon should be linked to create maximum awareness and interest. An example of this would be within the cultural centre where a Morelet's Crocodile interpretation could be created to fascinate and educate visitors about the lagoon, the crocodiles and conservation. Signs could direct visitors to the nesting zones, the best viewing areas and the boats. Likewise, signs at these areas could direct visitors to the museum and cultural centre.
- The boat trips should include stops at the viewing areas, nesting zones and the cultural centre. Cross promotion will enhance visitor's wilderness experience while providing education and spending at local businesses.