

Amazing  
Animals

# ALLIGATORS

Multiplication



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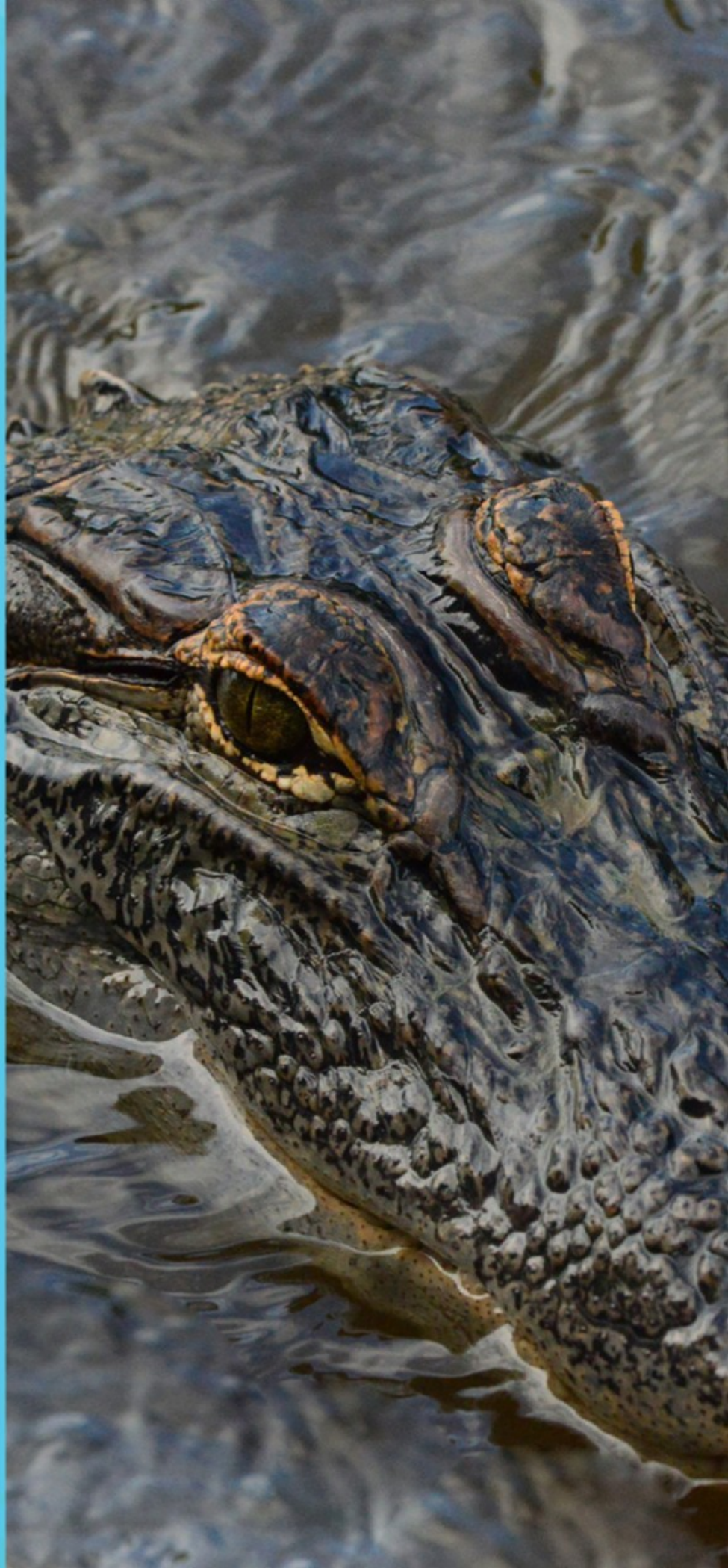
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# Powerful Reptiles

The air is hot and sticky. You sweat as you walk along a river in Florida. Suddenly, you hear a hiss from off to your left. As you peer through the tall grass surrounding the river, you see a pair of eyes flash in the water. You watch the alligator as you back away slowly. After a few steps, you hear a loud snap and you turn to run!

A close-up photograph of an American alligator resting on a grassy bank. The alligator's head is in the foreground, showing its textured, scaly skin and small eyes. Its body extends into the background, partially submerged in water. The image is framed by a torn-edge effect with a bright yellow-green background at the top.

American alligator



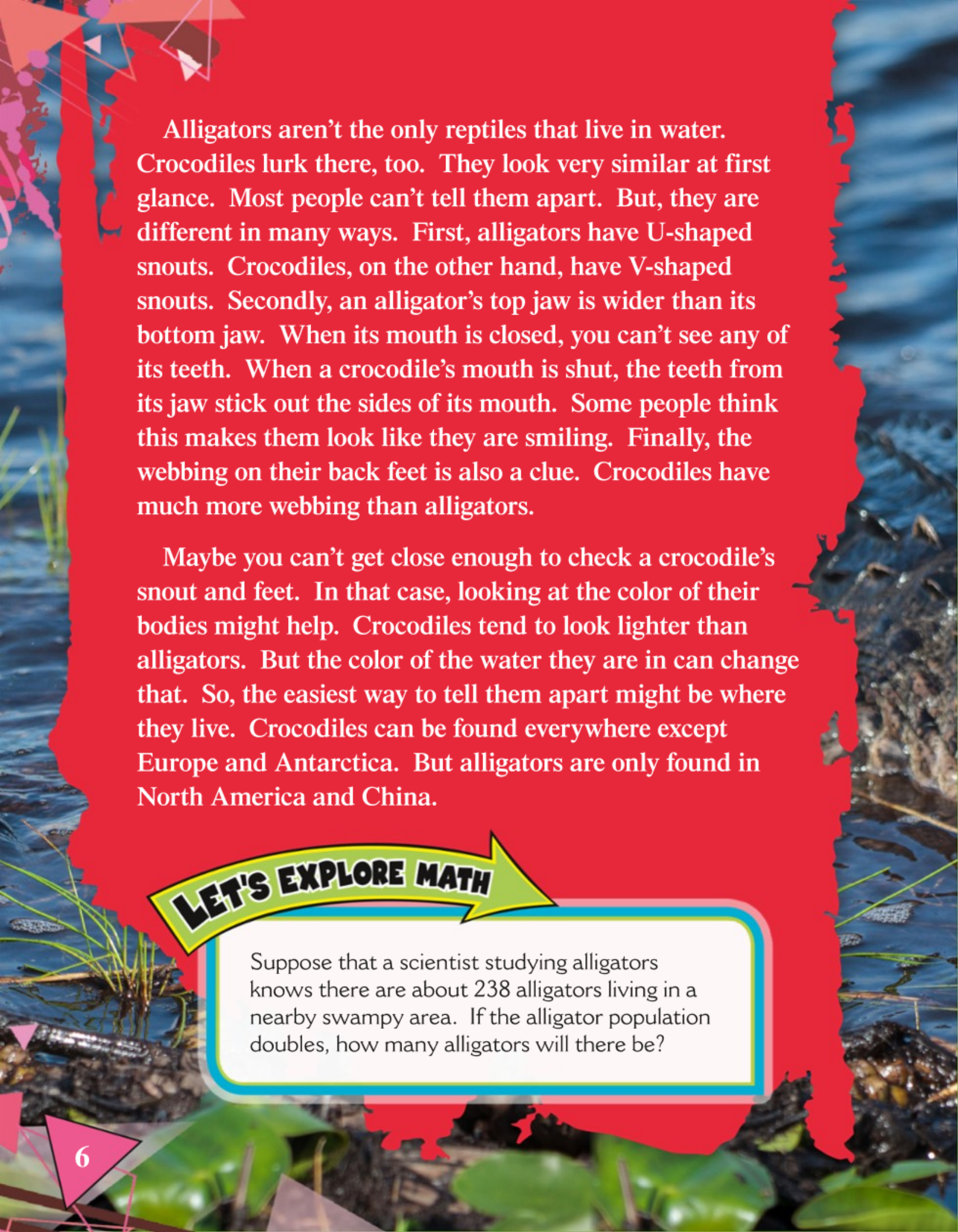


Chinese alligator

Alligators can be scary, but they are amazing creatures. There are two **species** of alligators in the world. American alligators are the largest **reptiles** in North America. Chinese alligators are smaller and can only be found along the Yangtze (YANG-SEE) River.

Alligators are very powerful reptiles. Their size and strength are massive. They use their strong tails to defend themselves. Their tails also help them push through water. They use their teeth and powerful jaws to clamp down on **prey**. Their teeth are specially shaped to rip food into smaller chunks. But, they often choose to just swallow the prey whole!





Alligators aren't the only reptiles that live in water. Crocodiles lurk there, too. They look very similar at first glance. Most people can't tell them apart. But, they are different in many ways. First, alligators have U-shaped snouts. Crocodiles, on the other hand, have V-shaped snouts. Secondly, an alligator's top jaw is wider than its bottom jaw. When its mouth is closed, you can't see any of its teeth. When a crocodile's mouth is shut, the teeth from its jaw stick out the sides of its mouth. Some people think this makes them look like they are smiling. Finally, the webbing on their back feet is also a clue. Crocodiles have much more webbing than alligators.

Maybe you can't get close enough to check a crocodile's snout and feet. In that case, looking at the color of their bodies might help. Crocodiles tend to look lighter than alligators. But the color of the water they are in can change that. So, the easiest way to tell them apart might be where they live. Crocodiles can be found everywhere except Europe and Antarctica. But alligators are only found in North America and China.

### LET'S EXPLORE MATH

Suppose that a scientist studying alligators knows there are about 238 alligators living in a nearby swampy area. If the alligator population doubles, how many alligators will there be?





crocodile



alligator

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