



For Immediate Release

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## **ENDANGERED DWARF CROCODILES HATCH AT TORONTO ZOO**

**November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004, Toronto, Ontario:** Toronto Zoo staff today introduced two female West African dwarf crocodiles successfully hatched on October 1, 2004 under the watchful eye of Zookeepers. The first baby to hatch weighed 53g and was 25.5cm long, the second hatchling weighed 45g and measured 23.5cm. The babies have been carefully nurtured in an incubator for the 130-day hatching period. Keepers served as surrogate mothers when they heard the baby crocodiles calling from the eggs. When the babies begin to hatch, their vocalizations can be heard from outside the nest. The mother (in this case, our keepers!) opens the nest and carries the babies to the water.

"We are really pleased to have watched courtship and nest building right here in the rainforest display along with our visitors. Now we can all see how beautiful these toothy crocodiles can be," says Bob Johnson, Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians.

Proud dad Montgomery "Monty" for short, is one of the Toronto Zoo's oldest inhabitants having resided here since it's opening in 1974. Mom, Cleo arrived in 1986 as a mate for Monty. Together they have had 20 offspring. While home is currently in the Toronto Zoo's African Rainforest Pavilion, when permits arrive the hatchlings will be heading to a Breeding Facility in the United States where they will be on breeding loan.

International trade in this species is now regulated. Although the exact figure is unknown, the remaining population in West Africa is vulnerable due to over-exploitation for bush meat in local markets, and their natural habitat is being destroyed by logging and wetland loss. Our babies, still quite small, could one-day reach 5 to 6 feet in length.

- 30 -

Zoo Hours until Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>: 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$18, Children 3 and under are FREE, Children 4-12 are \$10, and Seniors 65+ are \$12. Parking is free until March. Events are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Rd and Hwy. 401, Exit #389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929 or visit [www.torontozoo.com](http://www.torontozoo.com).