



DWARF CAIMAN

Phylum *Chordata*; Class *Reptilia*; Order *Crocodylia*; Family *Crocodylidae*; Subfamily *Alligatorinae*
Paleosuchus palpebrosus

Status: The United States Fish & Wildlife Service lists the black caiman, the broad-snouted caiman, and the Yacare caiman as endangered. The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) also lists the black caiman as endangered. In addition, several species of caimans are listed by CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. CITES is a United Nations treaty with over 100 member states that provides a means for regulating international trade in wild animals and plants.

Habitat & range: The six species of caiman are native to Mexico, Central America, and South America. Caimans can be found in a variety of habitat types, but are always near water. The spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*), which exists in a small reproducing population, has been introduced to Florida from Central and South America.

Diet: In the wild, caimans eat fish, turtles, birds and occasionally small mammals.

Length: Caimans range in size from the dwarf caiman (*Paleosuchus palpebrosus*), which typically measures 4-5 feet in length, to the black caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*), the largest of the caimans, which may reach lengths of 16 feet or more.

