



Decolonizing Crocodylian Collections: Developing a model system for bridging Historical Indigenous and Eurocentric interpretations of culturally and economically important species in museum holdings

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This project is intended to provide an exploratory model by which modern systems of species' valuation and delineation can gain context via the recognition and appreciation of knowledge generation co-produced by ancient, ancestral and Indigenous cultures and modern genomic methods. The project focuses on crocodylians, a group which figures prominently in cultural and artistic representations in communities around the globe. Cultural attributions of power, fertility and healing observed in pictorial and archival cultural heritage collections are combined to explore the value of these materials as sources of novel co-generated hypotheses about ecological and evolutionary interactions. I will present genomic data from crocodylians from sacred caves, lakes, tombs in natural and cultural heritage collections to examine how cultural and artistic representations of these species interact within enhance empirical data derived from Eurocentric science based methods. The goal of the project is to integrate historical archival narratives, cultural representations and modern genomic tools to develop new hypotheses about biological attributes of species and their shifting identities in human cultures. An additional goal is to broaden participation among stakeholders from diverse communities in specimen and object interpretation.