

Session III – Connecting People and the Ecosystems That Support Them
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Current Production and Effects of Feed Source and Feeding Time on the Growth and Carcass Values of *Crocodylus siamensis* in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam

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Abstract

The study was carried out aiming to investigate the current crocodile husbandry in the Mekong delta and find out the feeding time and feed sources that affect the growth of crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*). The survey was implemented in An Giang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Dong Thap and Kien Giang provinces of the Mekong delta. For the feeding trial, the experiment was a 2*2 factorial design with a 4 replications, The first factor was feed source (small sea fishes and Tilapia fish from fresh water) and the second factor was feeding time (feeding after 48 and 96 hours). Sixteen male crocodiles with an average live weight of 7.05 kg were individually raised in this experiment. The experiment period was four months. At the end of the experiment, these crocodiles were slaughtered to measure the weight of skin, carcass meat, bone and viscera.

The results showed that the crocodile husbandry in the Mekong Delta has been developing and is becoming a profitable production. Feed and nutrient intakes were significantly ($P < 0.05$) improved by feeding sea fish and feeding time after 48h. Average growth of crocodile was 30g/day when feeding sea fish as compared to 21.2g/day for Tilapia fish. This was 32.9g/day with feeding time after 48h compared to 18.6g/day with feeding time after 96h. The result also indicated that skin and meat were significantly ($P < 0.05$) higher for the sea fish and feeding time after 48h. The conclusion was that crocodile production in the Mekong delta had a great potential for development. Feeding sea fish was better than Tialapia fish, while feeding crocodiles after 48h improved growth rate and other products.