



# The Chinese Alligator: Ecology, Behavior, Conservation, and Culture

*John Thorbjarnarson, Xiaoming Wang*

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The rare and endangered Chinese alligator has long held a prominent place in Chinese culture and mythology. Here John Thorbjarnarson and Xiaoming Wang, who have been at the forefront of efforts to conserve these remarkable creatures, provide comprehensive details about the biology, behavior, history, and cultural and conservation significance of the animal thought to be the basis of the Chinese dragon legend.

Though more than 10,000 Chinese alligators live in zoos and breeding facilities, just a few hundred still exist in the wild. Much of their natural habitat has been lost to human development, leaving wild Chinese alligators clinging to small areas where the Yangtze River meets the Pacific Ocean. Thorbjarnarson and Wang recount how and why the species declined to the point where it is perhaps the most threatened of all crocodylians, discuss ongoing conservation works, and project what the future is likely to bring for the Chinese alligator. Their scientific synthesis sits in stark contrast to the alligators' unique relationship with Chinese culture, where folklore views it as a water deity related to dragons.

Illustrated throughout and featuring the most up-to-date biological information available, this volume is a complete overview of the Chinese alligator, a conservation and cultural icon.

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