

Dinosaur Chomper

Dinosaurs ruled the Earth millions of years ago. Now scientists say they have found the fossils of a giant crocodile. That might have scared even the biggest dinosaur.

What did it take to **terrify**¹ a dinosaur? How about a crocodile the size of a school bus! Scientists say such a crocodile lived in Africa about 110 million years ago. They nicknamed the giant beast "SuperCroc." Its proper name is *Sarcosuchus* (pronounced SARK-oh-SOOK-us) *imperator*, meaning "flesh crocodile emperor."



Africa and
Niger on the
globe

Scientists recently announced they had found the fossil remains of such a beast. The animal had 6-foot-long jaws lined with 100 razor-sharp teeth. Bony plates covered the deadly reptile's body. The fossils were discovered in October 2000 in Niger, a country in Africa.

"We had never seen anything like it," said scientist Paul Sereno. "The **snout**² and teeth were designed for grabbing prey [such as] fish, turtles, and dinosaurs that [came] too close." Sereno said *Sarcosuchus* was one of the largest crocodiles that ever lived.

Dino Hunter

Sereno and fellow scientists found the *Sarcosuchus* fossils in an area of an African desert called the Sahara. Although today the Sahara is dry and sandy, millions of years ago it was covered with jungles and big rivers.

SuperCroc probably hunted much as crocodiles do today, said the scientists. The ancient animal hid underwater, with just its eyes and snout showing. When a medium-sized dinosaur came to the water's edge, SuperCroc would lunge and snatch it up in its powerful jaws.

¹ **to terrify:** to cause great fear

² **snout:** the protruding portion of an animal's face, consisting of its nose, mouth, and jaw.

Reading Passage



"When this thing grew into an adult, it was really a monster," Sereno said. "[SuperCroc] could have easily pulled down a good-sized dinosaur," he said.

SuperCroc's remains will be displayed at several museums across the country.

Niger

Population: About 10,075,511 people live in Niger.

Languages: The main languages are French, Hausa, and Djerma.

Land and Climate: Deserts or mountains cover much of northern and central Niger. The Air mountain range is in the north-central part of the country.

Wild Animals and Plant Life: Palm, kapok, and baobab trees grow in the southern part of Niger. Some animals that live in the northern area are foxes, gazelles, and antelope. Elephants, baboons, and giraffes live in the south.