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"Endangered"

Pooley, Simon

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I clearly recall sitting in the warm sand next to my father, cradling the large white egg of a crocodile in my small hands. It was a source of wonder that the huge, armour-plated toothy beasts in the enclosure nearby had once been enfolded into this small space, encased within this fragile shell. If I dropped this egg and it cracked, the embryonic individual crocodile inside it would die, its life-sustaining fluids leaking into the thirsty sand of the floodplain.

The reason I was able to handle a Nile crocodile egg was that my father Tony and others (not too many others) were concerned that this species was endangered, and had initiated conservation measures to ensure their survival. Tony had collected the egg from a threatened breeding ground, carefully packed it in grass with a spot marking which end should remain uppermost, and carefully reburied the clutch at the croc centre. When the hatchlings were ready to emerge they began to yelp, and we played "mother" and unearthed the eggs. (Author's introduction)

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