

## A LEGEND SAYS THAT.....

In the Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Pace at San Michele Extra (VR), there is a stuffed Nile crocodile 5 m long. According to legend, the reptile was an ex-voto offered by a noblewoman in the 600's in exchange for her acquired good health after having approached the Madonna with faith. **The crocodile, which supposedly weighed about 1,000 kg, was brought to Italy by a noblewoman's ancestor, a crusader knight. In the early 900's, the friars of the Sanctuary handed it over for restoration to Vittorio Dal Nero, the first director of the Museum of Natural History: after restoring it, he kept the skull at the Museum and returned the body to the friars.**

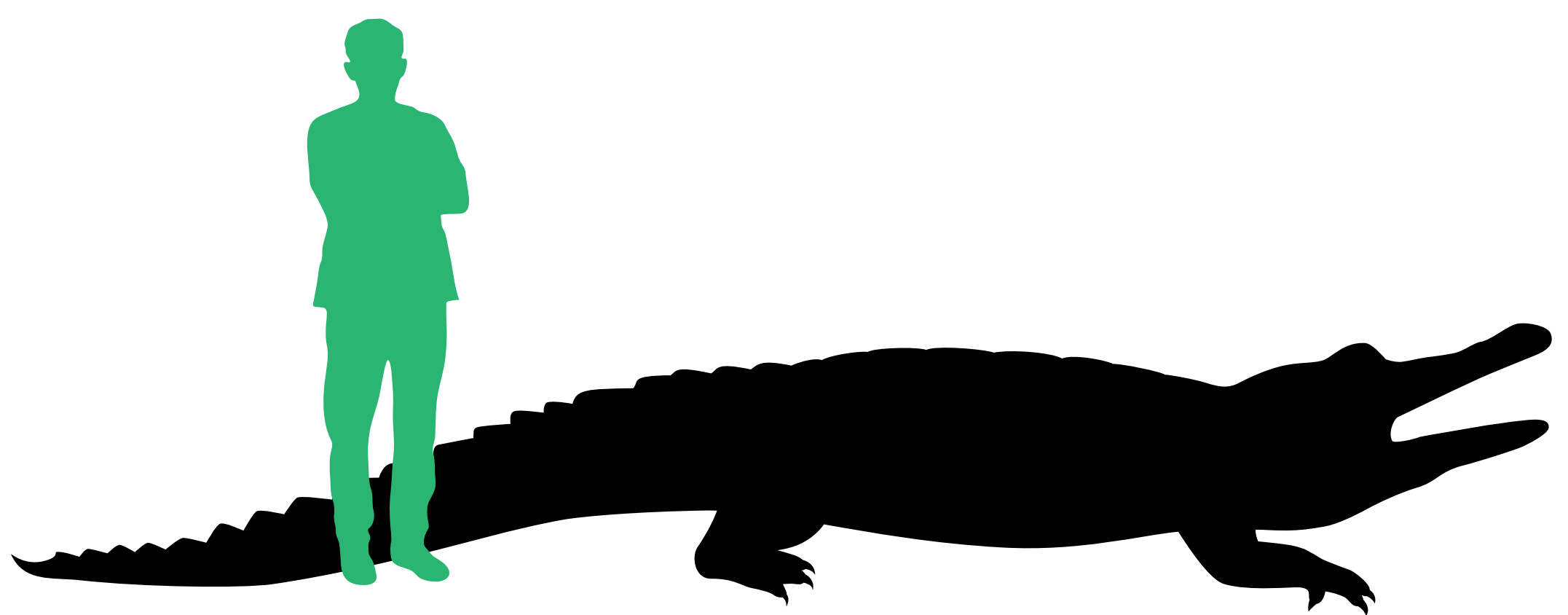
## WHO IS HE?

**The Nile crocodile** (*Crocodylus niloticus*) is a reptile living in Africa and its habitats are lakes, rivers and water basins of any type. It has also been sighted in salt water. **Its average lifespan is 75-100 years. The length and the dimension of its body are strongly influenced by the availability of food: for this reason it can reach up to 6 m in length and weigh 1200 kg.**

## HOW DOES A CROCODILE EAT?

The crocodile can't chew, so it rips large chunks of meat from its prey and swallows them whole.

**Its teeth are strong, they grow continuously and, if they break or fall out, are replaced by new ones.**



## Did you know?

**The sex of crocodiles is determined by the incubation temperature of the eggs: under 29°C all will be females.**