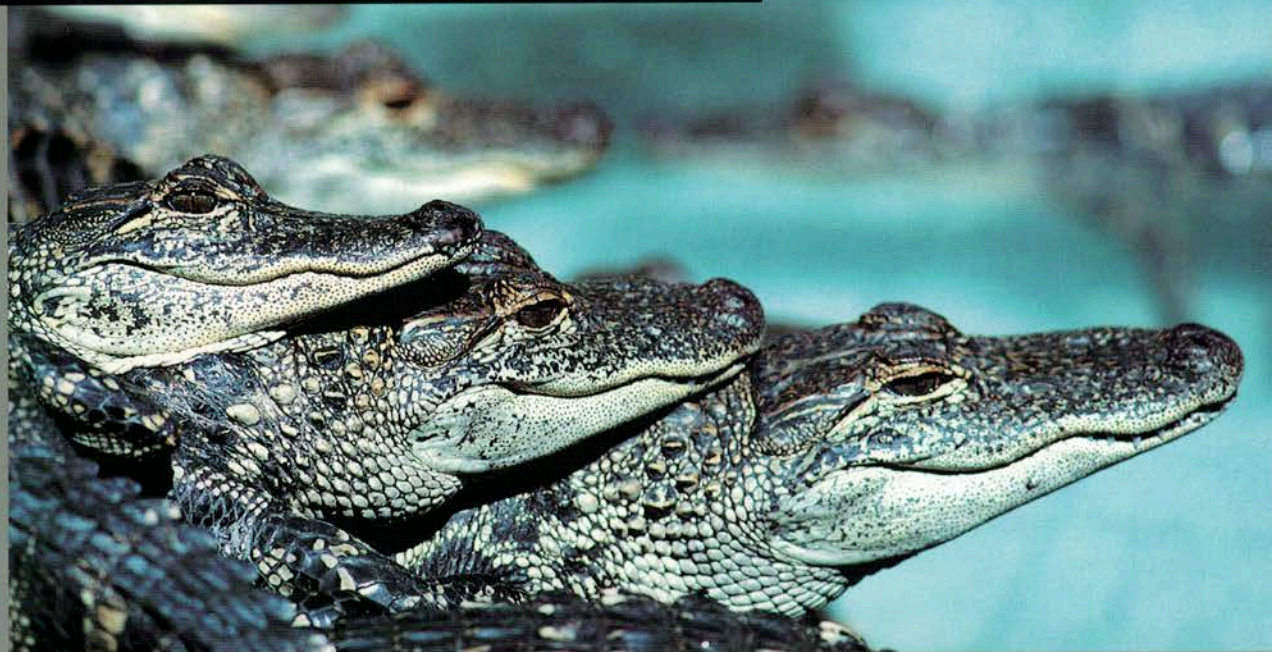


Portfolio

Florida's aborigine, the American crocodile (*Crocodilus acutus*), resting on dry land where a feathered friend performs a welcome skin treatment (below).

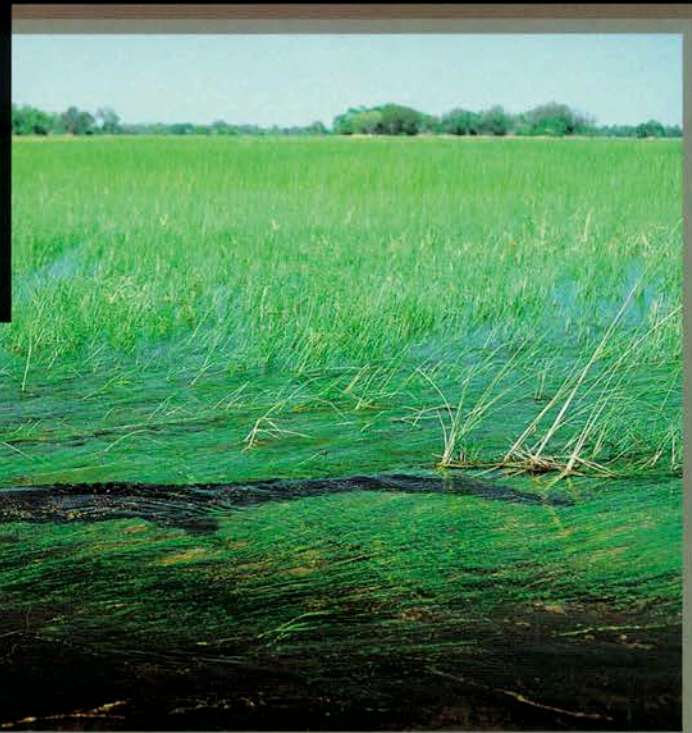


Perfect camouflage is essential to successful hunting: a Mississippi alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) in a mass of duckweed (above). Its offspring enjoy a spot of communal sunbathing (below).





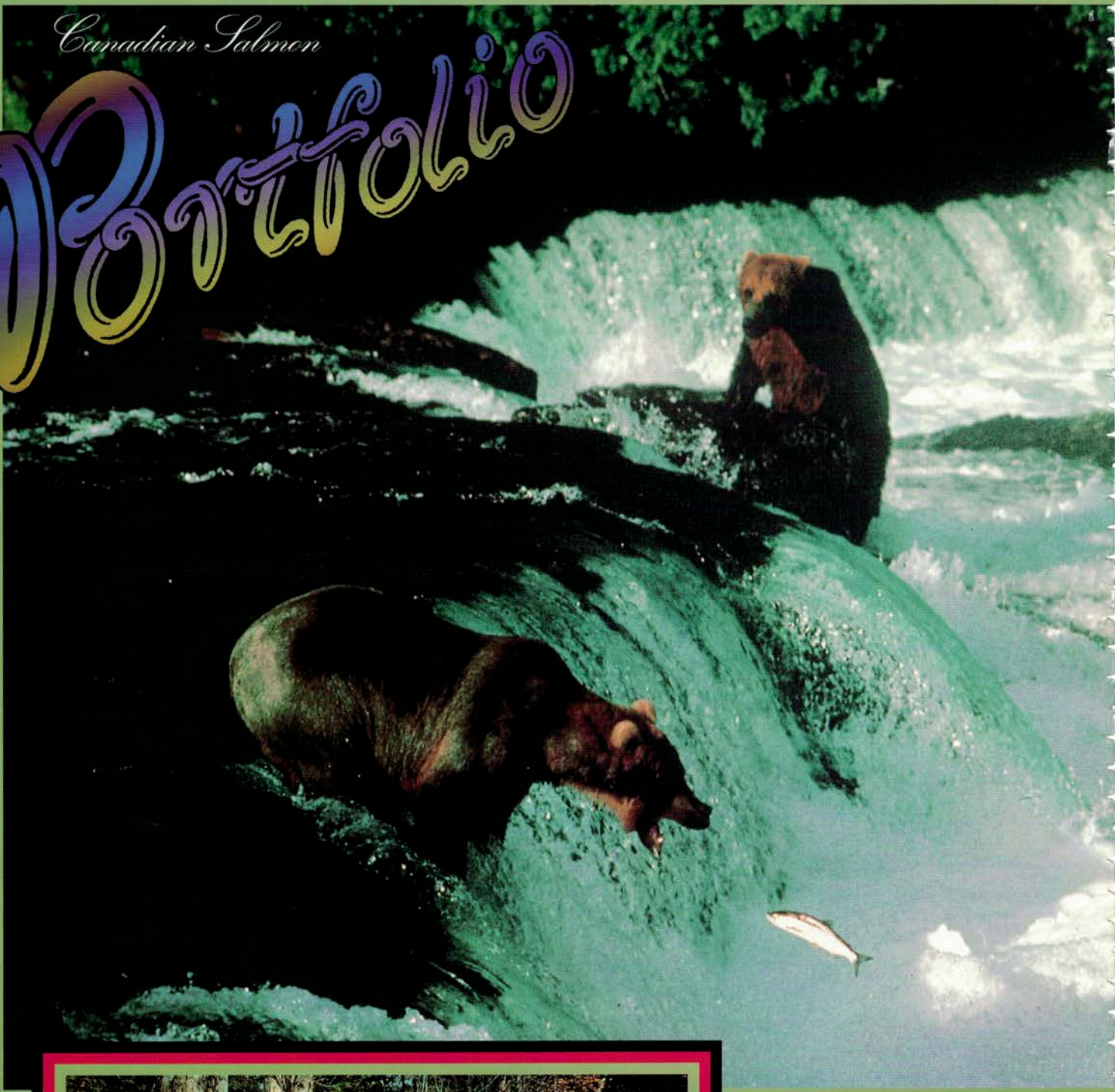
On the Boro in the Okavango Delta in Botswana, a Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*) waiting for its prey (above).



Africa's largest armoured reptiles are exceptionally able swimmers and divers (above and right). They are masters of the "sneak attack", surging from beneath the water's surface to seize prey from the bank, but at the same time they are not above taking floating carrion.

Canadian Salmon

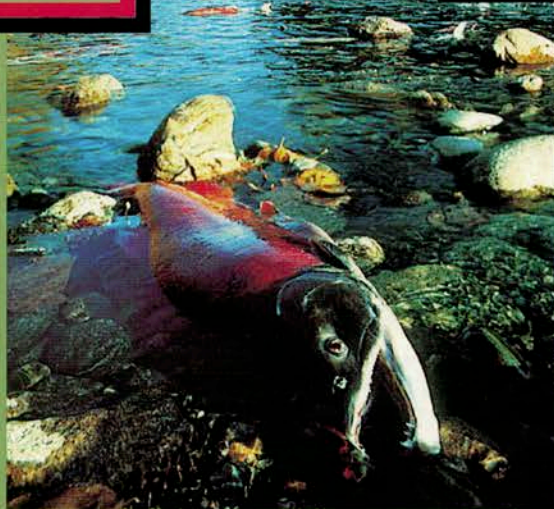
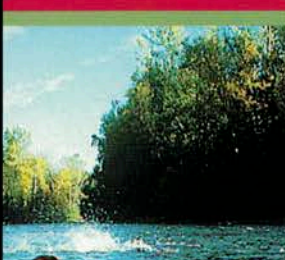
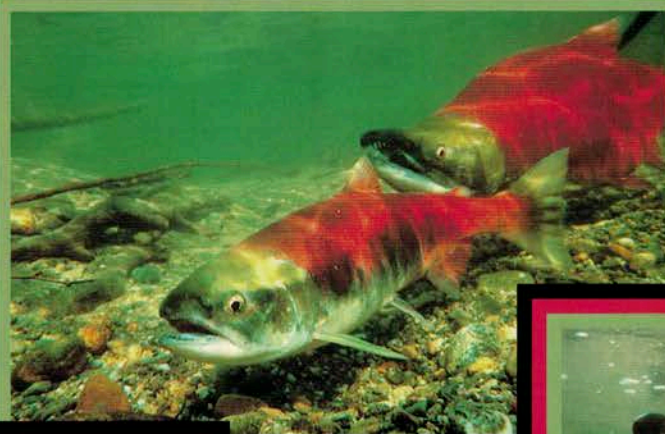
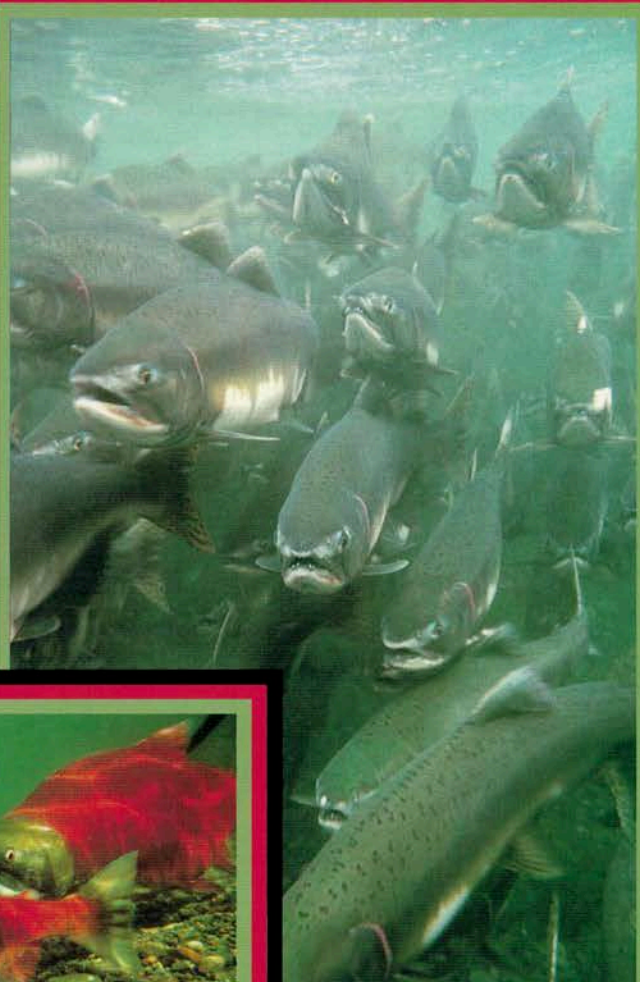
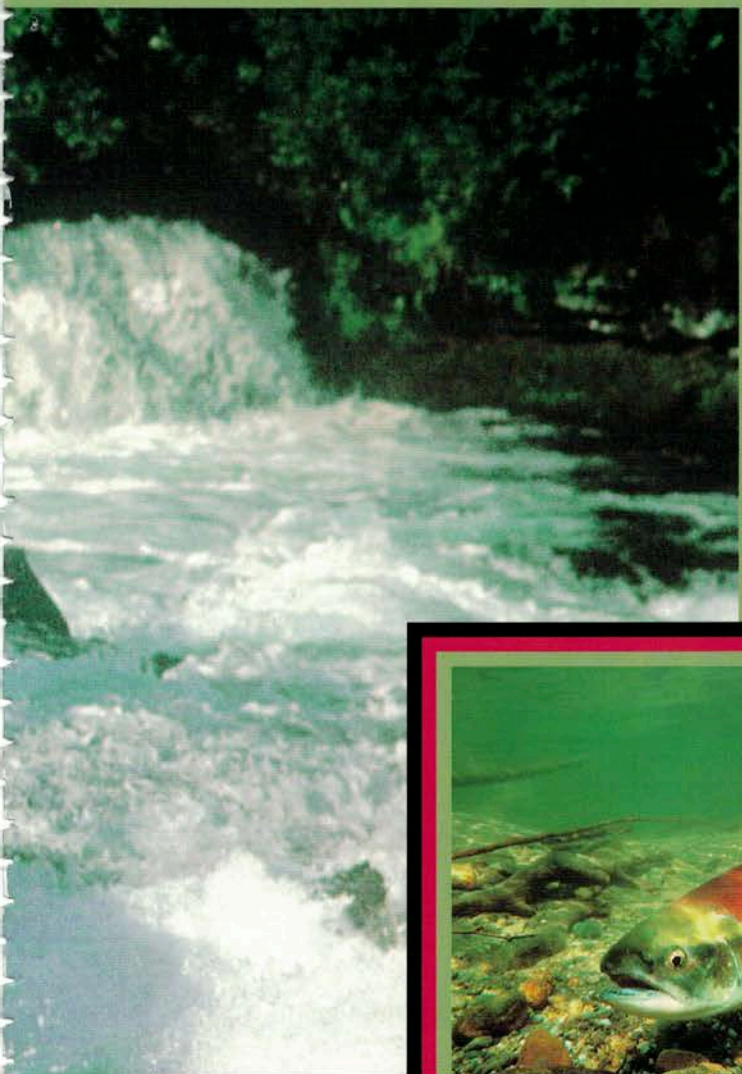
Portfolio



In the Canadian wilderness there are as yet no dams to block the passage upstream of the Pacific sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) to spawn.

Left: the spawning grounds shown here are in the Adams River, British Columbia.

Above: the leaping fishes are a rich prize for the skilful brown bear (*Ursus arctos*).



Top right: the Pacific pink salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) also migrate up their native rivers in western Canada. Centre right: during the spawning period all Pacific salmon males develop much twisted and elongated upper and lower jaws, while females remain unchanged in appearance. Centre: pair of Pacific sockeye salmon.

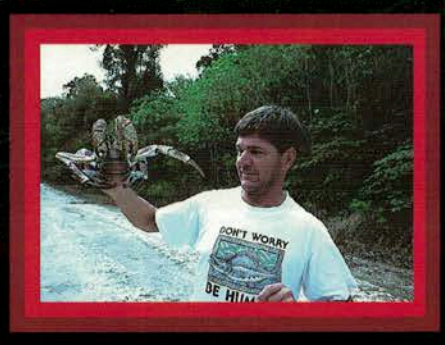
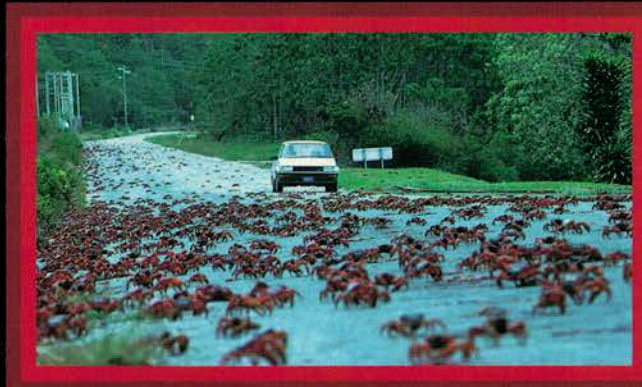
Centre left: they migrate even through extremely shallow waters to the river's headwaters, and many of them die from exhaustion after spawning (left); unlike the Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), which usually spawns only once in its lifetime and then almost invariably dies.

Portfolio

Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean has an incomparable natural spectacle: the migration of the red land crab (*Gecarcoidea natalis*).

At full moon, during the beginning of the monsoon season (November), an estimated 250 million crabs make their inexorable way from the woods (right and below) to the sea-shore (above). Here the males excavate mating pits. After mating each female lays up to 3000 eggs to keep them on the underside of the body until the young hatch.





While laying their eggs many females die of exhaustion or drown in the salt-water. After 3-4 weeks tiny crabs make their way back to the island, where, 3 years later, they in turn perform the mating ritual passed down through their genes.

The Swiss Michel Roggo (with a coconut crab, *Birgus latro*) has been photographing freshwater biotopes and their inhabitants all over the world since 1987 (see also ag 8).

