





Professor Tim Berra shows off his net after its tangle with the 5m croc Agro on the Adelaide River

Agro the croc's a fast learner

By **ALYSSA BETTS**

ONE of evolution's most successful and bitey archetypes has been stalking an American evolutionary expert on the Adelaide River.

A 5m croc called Agro has marked out Ohio State University Professor Tim Berra as a source of good eating.

Professor Berra has been floating about in a small boat with a net, as part of his work studying the life history of the nursery fish.

He said his first Agro encounter involved a fake log in his nets on Thursday.

"We saw the floats bob-

bing around from a distance and thought, 'we must have a bunch of fish in the net, we better go release them'," he said.

"The closer we got to the net we saw this log. All of a sudden this log raises its gigantic head and its got bits of net in its mouth."

Professor Berra said he he wanted to try to free the beast from the nets so it wouldn't roll in them, get tangled and drown.

"On the other hand, who wants to unwrap him? That's not what I applied for," he said.

Agro simply tore a "hum-

ungous hole" in the net and got away after having his fill. But he'd memorised Professor Berra.

Agro wasted no time when the man — who is also a Charles Darwin University professorial fellow — went out in the boat on Tuesday.

"He was actually stalking our boat," Professor Berra said. "He was motoring on up to us pushing a bow wave in front of him, heading straight for our second net that was quite full of fish."

He said Agro put his head on the float line, then dived down and spent about 10 minutes underwater gorging

on a captive meal. They wanted to pull the net up but decided against it.

"He's 5m long, I don't need to say any more," Berra said.

Professor Berra works with a number of NT locals, including Dion Wedd, Territory Wildlife Park curator, and Quentin Allsop and Grant Johnson of NT Fisheries. He said nursery fish were one in a number of weird Aussie types he studied.

"They're called that because the males carry the eggs on a hook on their heads," Berra said. "They're politically correct — they share the child rearing."