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**THE CROCODYLE DIVERSITY OF “LA BUITRERA” (CANDELEROS
FORMATION), RÍO NEGRO PROVINCE[†]**

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‘La Buitrera’ is a recently discovered locality of the Candeleros Formation (Early Cenomanian) exposed in northern Río Negro Province. Between 1999 and 2002, this locality provided an abundant tetrapod fauna which includes sphenodontids, snakes, sauropod and theropod dinosaurs, fishes, anurans, mammals and crocodiles, which inhabited a markedly fluvial region. ‘La Buitrera’ has also shown an important crocodile diversity that includes at least three species of the terrestrial mesoeucrocodylian *Araripesuchus*, and two big indeterminate crocodiles, perhaps aquatic neosuchians. It is worth noting that from the Neuquenian side of the formation outcrops comes a different species of araripesuchid (*Araripesuchus patagonicus*). This diversity is comparable to that observed in other non strictly contemporary units of the Cretaceous of South America, such as the Aptian Santana Formation (*Araripesuchus gomesi* and *Itasuchus*), the Albian Itapecuru Formation (*Candidodon*), and Senonian units such as the Bauru Group (*Mariliasuchus*) in Brazil, the Guichon Formation at Uruguay (*Uruguaysuchus*), and the Bajo de la Carpa Formation (Santonian) in Patagonia, which supplied a large variety of mesoeucrocodylians (*Notosuchus*, *Comahuesuchus*, *Lomasuchus* and peirosaurids). The high diversity of mesoeucrocodylians present in the faunal associations of the Cretaceous of South America is remarkable, and they apparently constituted a quite dominant element.

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