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Hatching of Alligator mississippiensis. Prior to and during hatching the eggshell becomes extensively cracked and peels away from the underlying eggshell membrane. The weakening and cleavage of the eggshell greatly facilitate hatching, as the alligator has only to slit the eggshell membrane with the egg caruncle at the tip of its snout and then to emerge from the egg, head first. Eggs incubated without nesting media never hatch due to an abnormally tough shell. Length of the egg is 70 millimeters; length of the embryo is 230 millimeters. Hatching time (from the first to last photograph) is 1.2 minutes. See page 1135. [Mark W. J. Ferguson, Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland]
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