



## Release of Gharials

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### Why in News

Recently Government of Uttar Pradesh has released **Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*)** in the **Ghaghara river for** the conservation and protection in natural habitat.



### Key Points

- **Natural Habitat:** Fresh waters of the northern part of India.
- Gharials, sometimes called gavials, are a type of Asian crocodilian distinguished by their long, thin snouts which **resembles a pot (*ghara* in Hindi)**.
- **Significance:** Population of Gharials are a **good indicator of clean river water**.
- **Gharials** are a type of Crocodilians that also includes crocodiles, alligators, caimans, etc. India has **three species of crocodilians namely:**
  - **Gharial** (*Gavialis gangeticus*): **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)- Critically Endangered.**
  - **Mugger crocodile** (*Crocodylus palustris*): IUCN- Vulnerable
  - **Saltwater crocodile** (*Crocodylus porosus*): IUCN- Least Concern
- In comparison to Crocodiles, Gharials are very shy and unharmed species.

- **Primary Habitat: Chambal river**
  - The Chambal originates at the **Singar Chouri peak** in the northern slopes of the Vindhya mountains (Indore, Madhya Pradesh).
  - It joins the Yamuna River in **Etawah District of UP**.
  - **Tributaries:** Banas, Kali Sindh, Parbati.
  - The **National Chambal Sanctuary** is located along river Chambal on the tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. It is known for critically endangered gharials, the **red-crowned roof turtle**, and the **endangered Ganges river dolphin**.
- **Secondary Habitat:** Ghaghra and Gandak river, Girwa river (Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh), the Ramganga river in Jim Corbett National Park and the Sone river.
- **Status:** Gharials are **critically endangered** in the **International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Species**.
  - Listed under **Schedule I** of the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**.
  - Listed on **Appendix I** of **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**.
- **Conservation Efforts:** Breeding Centres of **Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre** in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, **National Chambal Sanctuary** (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).
- **Threats:**
  - Gharials **prefer sandbanks** as suitable habitats. Wild animals as well as humans often destroy their eggs.
  - Increased **river pollution, dam construction, massive-scale fishing operations and floods**.
  - Illegal sand mining and poaching.

## Ghaghara River

- It acts as an important aquatic corridor for gharials in Uttar Pradesh.
- Its source is near **Gurla Mandhata peak, south of Mansarovar** in Tibet.
- It is known as the **Karnali** in Western Nepal.
- Its important tributaries are the **Sarda, the Sarju (Ayodhya is located on its bank) and the Rapti**.
- The Ghaghara joins the Ganga a few kilometres downstream of **Chhapra in Bihar**.
- After reaching the plain area, its stream gets divided into many branches of which, Koriyab and Garwa are important.
- The river bed is sandy and sudden bends start occurring in the stream.

**Source:DTE**