



Gharials

Why in News

Recently, the Department of Punjab Forest and Wildlife Preservation, in collaboration with the [World-Wide Fund for Nature-India \(WWF-India\)](#) has released a lot of **24 gharials (Gavialis Gangeticus)** into the **Beas** Conservation Reserve.

- The gharial reintroduction in the **Beas Conservation Reserve is an ambitious programme of the Punjab government.**



Key Points

▪ About:

- Gharials, sometimes called gavials, are a type of Asian crocodilian distinguished by their long, thin snouts. Crocodilians are a group of **reptiles** that includes crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and more.
- India has **three species of Crocodilians namely:**

- **Gharial (Gavialis gangeticus):** [IUCN Red List](#)- Critically Endangered
- **Mugger crocodile (Crocodylus palustris):** **IUCN- Vulnerable.**
- **Saltwater crocodile (Crocodylus porosus):** IUCN- Least Concern.

- All the three are listed on **Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Exception:** Saltwater Crocodile populations of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are included in **Appendix II of CITES.**

▪ Habitat of Gharials:

- **Natural Habitat:** Fresh waters of the northern part of India.
- **Primary Habitat:** [Chambal river](#) (a tributary of Yamuna).
- **Secondary Habitat:** [Ghagra](#), Gandak river, Girwa river (Uttar Pradesh), the Ramganga river (Uttarakhand) and the Sone river (Bihar).

- **Significance:** Population of Gharials are a good indicator of clean river water.

▪ Conservation Efforts:

- Breeding Centres of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).

▪ Threats:

- Increased river pollution, dam construction, massive-scale fishing operations and floods.
- Illegal sand mining and poaching.

Beas Conservation Reserve

- It is a **185-kilometre stretch of the Beas River located primarily in the north-west** of the State of Punjab.
- The Reserve **also hosts the only known population in India of the endangered [Indus River Dolphin \(*Platanista gangetica minor*\)](#).**



- In 2017, a programme was initiated to re-introduce the critically endangered gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) with 47 individuals released into the River 30 years after their disappearance.

Beas River

- It originates **near the Rohtang Pass, at a height of 4,062 m** above sea level, on the southern end of the **Pir Panjal Range**, close to the source of the Ravi. It is a tributary of the Indus river.
- It meets the **Satluj river at Harike in Punjab**. It is a comparatively small river which is only 460 km long but lies entirely within the Indian territory.
- It forms a **gorge at Kati and Largi in the Dhauladhar range**.
- The **major tributaries** of the Beas River are Bain, Banganga, Luni and Uhal, along with Banner,

Chakki, Gaj, Harla, Mamuni, Parvati, Patlikuhlal, Sainj, Suketi and Tirthan.

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