



Crocodylian Species in India

Why in News

Recently, **Odisha's Kendrapara district** has earned the distinction of being the **only district in India where all three species of crocodiles, [salt-water](#), [gharial](#) and [mugger](#), are found.**

Key Points

▪ Mugger or Marsh Crocodile:



◦ **Description:**

- An egg-laying and hole-nesting species, also known to be dangerous.

◦ **Habitat:**

- Mainly **restricted to the Indian subcontinent** where it may be found in a number of freshwater habitat types and also in coastal saltwater lagoons and estuaries.
- It is **already extinct in Bhutan and Myanmar.**

◦ **Threats:**

- Habitat destruction, fragmentation, and transformation, fishing activities and use of crocodile parts for medicinal purposes.

◦ **Protection Status:**

- [IUCN List of Threatened Species](#): Vulnerable
- [CITES](#): Appendix I
- [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#): Schedule I

▪ **Estuarine or Saltwater Crocodile:**



- **Description:**

- Considered as the **Earth's largest living crocodile species**, infamous globally as a known man-eater.

- **Habitat:**

- Found in Odisha's [Bhitarkanika National Park](#), the [Sundarbans](#) in West Bengal and the [Andamans and Nicobar Islands](#).
- Also found across Southeast Asia and northern Australia.

- **Threats:**

- Illegal hunting, habitat loss, and antipathy toward the species because of its reputation as a man-eater.

- **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN List of Threatened Species:** Least Concern
- **CITES** : Appendix I (except the populations of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, which are included in Appendix II).
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** : Schedule I

- **Gharial:**



- **Description:**

- Sometimes called gavials, are **a type of Asian crocodylian** distinguished by their long, thin snouts which resembles a pot (ghara in Hindi).
- The population of Gharials is a **good indicator of clean river water**.
- Known to be **a relatively harmless, fish-eating species**.

- **Habitat:**

- Mostly found in **fresh waters of the himalayan rivers**.
- The [Chambal river](#) in the northern slopes of the Vindhya mountains (Madhya Pradesh) is known as the **primary habitat** of gharials.
- Other himalayan rivers like [Ghagra](#), Gandak river, Girwa river, Ramganga river and

the Sone river are **secondary habitats.**

- **Threats:**

- Illegal sand mining, poaching, increased river pollution, dam construction, massive-scale fishing operations and **Floods.**

- **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN List of Threatened Species:** Critically Endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I

- **Conservation Efforts:**

- **Odisha** has announced a **cash award of Rs. 1,000** to conserve gharials in **Mahanadi River Basin.**
- The **Crocodile Conservation Project** was **launched in 1975** in different States.

Source: DTE

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