



# World Crocodile Day 2024

Source: DTE

## Why in the News?

[World Crocodile Day](#) is celebrated on **17<sup>th</sup> June**. The day is a **global awareness campaign** to highlight the plight of [endangered crocodiles](#) and alligators around the world.

## What is the Crocodile Conservation Project?

### ▪ About:

- The [Crocodile Conservation Project](#) was initiated by the [United Nations](#) and **the Government of India**, shortly after the passage of the [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#).
- The primary objectives were to **protect natural habitats**, boost crocodile populations through **captive breeding**, and address the low survival rates of hatchlings in the wild.
- The project set up breeding and rearing centers at 34 sites in India, including **Bhitarkanika**, to protect and revive the country's endangered crocodilian population, particularly focusing on [estuarine or saltwater crocodiles](#) (*Crocodylus porosus*).


### ▪ Current Crocodile Population and Distribution:

- The saltwater crocodile population in [Bhitarkanika](#) has significantly increased from 95 individuals in 1975 to 1,811 as of the latest reptile census report (2023).
- The [saltwater crocodile](#) is now found in three primary locations in India: Bhitarkanika, the Sundarbans, and the [Andaman and Nicobar Islands](#).

### ▪ Human-Crocodile Conflict:

- Rising crocodile numbers in Bhitarkanika have caused **more conflicts** with humans, resulting in 50 deaths since 2014, prompting officials to install barricades at 120 river banks to curb attacks, yet conflicts persist.

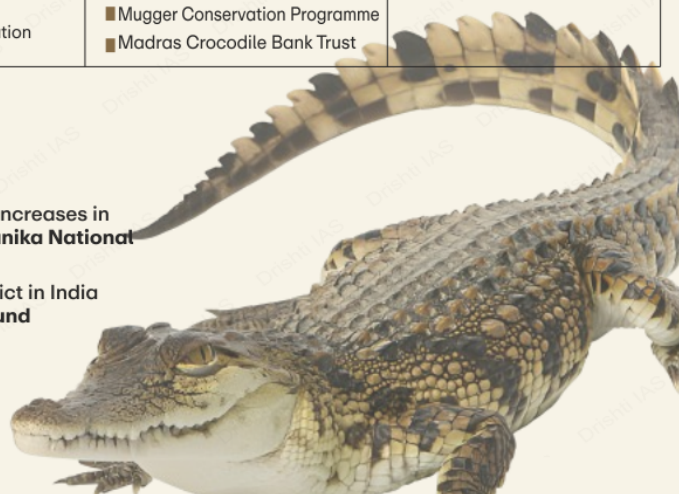
# CROCODILE SPECIES IN INDIA

India harbours three diverse  crocodile species—Mugger, Saltwater, and Gharial—found in distinct habitats nationwide.

Aspects	Gharial	Mugger/Indian Crocodile	Saltwater Crocodile
<b>Scientific Name</b>	<i>Gavialis Gangeticus</i> 	<i>Crocodylus Palustris</i> 	<i>Crocodylus Porosus</i> 
<b>Distribution: India</b>	<b>Viable Population:</b> National Chambal Sanctuary (U.P, Raj, M.P) <b>Small Non-Breeding Population:</b> Son, Gandak, Hooghly, Ghagra & Satkosia WLS (Odisha)	Throughout India	East Coast (Odisha's Bhitarkanika WLS, Andaman & Nicobar Islands coast & Sundarbans)
<b>Distribution: Neighbourhood</b>	Brahmaputra of Bhutan & Bangladesh & Irrawaddy River	Extinct in Bhutan and Myanmar	Across Southeast Asia
<b>Special Feature</b>	Longest of all Crocodile, Long and thin Snout	Egg-laying, Hole-nesting, Wide & U-shaped Snout	Largest living reptile, Pointed & V-shaped Snout
<b>Habitat</b>	Freshwater	Freshwater	Saltwater, Brackish & Wetlands
<b>IUCN Status</b>	CR	VU	LC
<b>CITES Status</b>	Appendix I	Appendix I	Appendix I
<b>CMS Status</b>	Appendix I	-	Appendix II
<b>WPA,1972 Status</b>	Schedule I	Schedule I	Schedule I
<b>Threats</b>	Dams, Pollution, Sand mining	Habitat Destruction	Hunted for its skin and Habitat loss
<b>Government Initiatives</b>	■ Odisha: Rs. 1000 award to conserve Gharial in Mahanadi River Basin ■ Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975	■ Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975 ■ Mugger Conservation Programme ■ Madras Crocodile Bank Trust	Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975

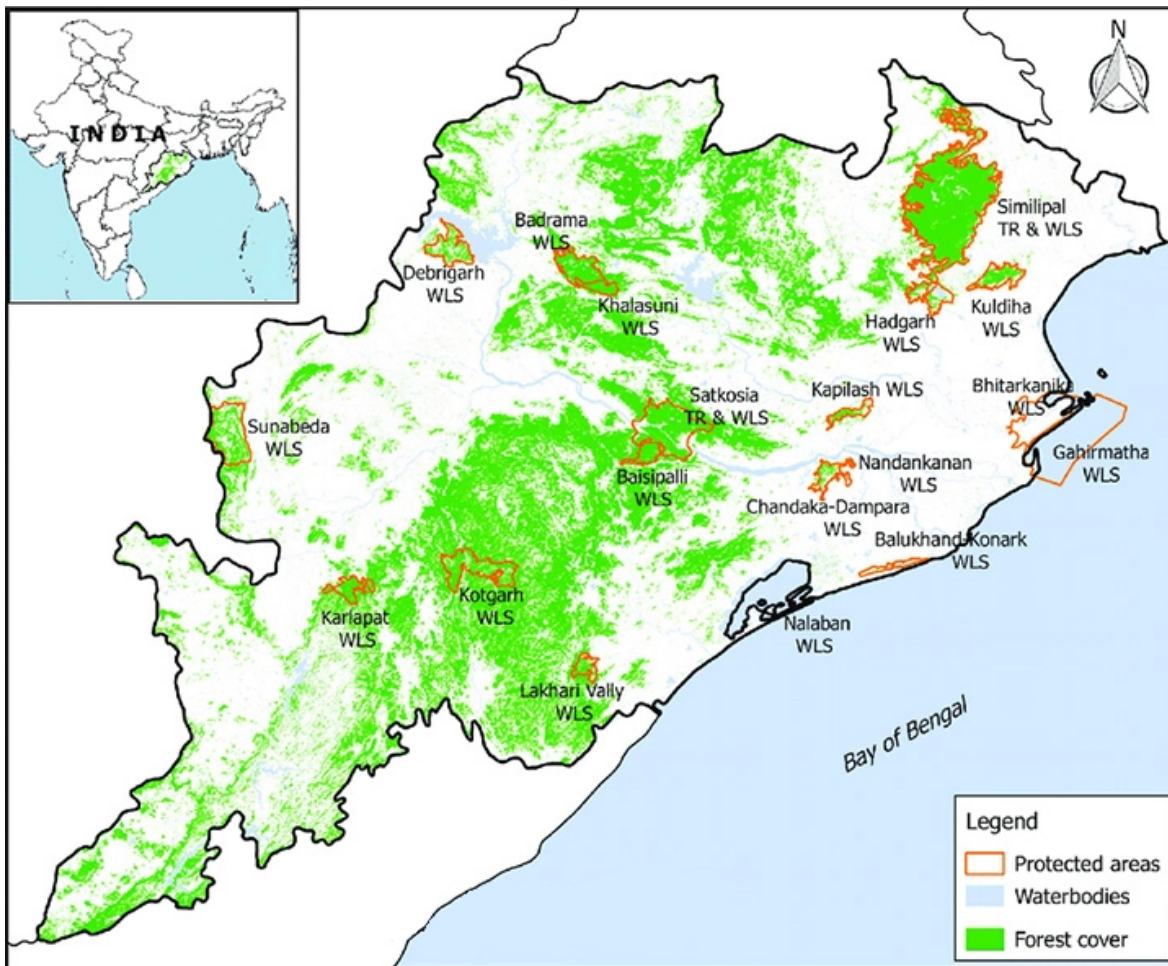
## MISCELLANEOUS FACTS

- ➞ **17th June:** World Crocodile Day
- ➞ **Annual Reptile Census, 2023:** Marginal Increases in number of saltwater crocodiles (**Bhitarkanika National Park** and its nearby areas)
- ➞ **Odisha's Kendrapara District:** Only district in India where all three species of crocodiles found



## Key Facts About Bhitarkanika National Park

- [Bhitarkanika National Park](#) is spread over a vast area of 672 km in Orissa.
- It is the second-largest [Mangrove ecosystem](#) of India after [Sundarbans](#).
- The **National Park is essentially a network of creeks** and canals that are inundated with waters from rivers Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, and Patasala forming a unique ecosystem.
- Its proximity to the [Bay of Bengal](#) makes the soil of the area enriched with salts, and the vegetation and the species of the sanctuary are comprised of those that are mainly found in the tropical and subtropical intertidal regions.
- It is the breeding place for the [Salt Water Crocodiles](#).
- The Gahirmatha Beach which forms the boundary of the sanctuary in the east is the largest colony of the [Olive Ridley Sea Turtles](#).
- Bhitarkanika is also home to **eight varieties** of **Kingfisher birds** which is also a rarity.



## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. If you want to see gharials in their natural habitat, which one of the following is the best place to visit? (2017)**

- (a) Bhitarkanika Mangroves
- (b) Chambal River
- (c) Pulicat Lake
- (d) Deepor Beel

**Ans: (b)**