



# Gharial Hatchlings Thrive in Chambal River

## Why in News?

The **National Chambal Sanctuary** has seen 1,186 gharial hatchlings born in the Etawah range and 840 in the Bah range, and now they are all frolicking in the [Chambal River](#).


- Gharial eggs incubate for 50 to 60 days, with hatchlings emerging in early June and the hatching phase lasting about a month.

## Key Points

Gharials:

- **About:** The [gharial \(\*Gavialis gangeticus\*\)](#) is distinct from other crocodilians due to its long snout.
  - **Crocodiles** are the largest surviving reptiles, primarily inhabiting freshwater swamps, lakes, and rivers, with one saltwater species.
    - They are **nocturnal and poikilothermic** (also known as ectotherms or cold-blooded animals, are characterized by their body temperature fluctuating with the surrounding environment).
- **Distribution:** According to the [Wildlife Institute of India](#), gharials were widely distributed in the Brahmaputra, [Ganga](#), [Indus](#), and the Mahanadi-Brahmani-Baitarani river systems of India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.
  - Currently, their major populations occur in three [tributaries of the Ganga](#) (the Chambal and Girwa in India, and the Rapti-Narayani river in Nepal).
  - Odisha is the only Indian state to host wild populations of **all three native crocodilian species** (Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), Mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), and Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*)).
- **Population:** India hosts nearly 80% of the global wild gharial population, with around 3,000 individuals across sites like [National Chambal Sanctuary](#), Katarnia Ghat, and Son Gharial Sanctuary.
- **Crocodile Conservation Project:** India launched its CCP at Odisha's [Bhitarkanika National Park](#) with support from the [United Nations Development Programme](#) and the [Food and Agriculture Organisation](#).
  - It adopted the "rear and release" method, created protected habitats like Bhitarkanika and [Satkosia Tiger Reserve](#), and promoted captive breeding and community awareness, making it a national model for crocodilian conservation.
  - On [World Crocodile Day \(17th June\)](#), India commemorates 50 years of its Crocodile Conservation Project (CCP) (1975–2025).

# CROCODILE SPECIES IN INDIA

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

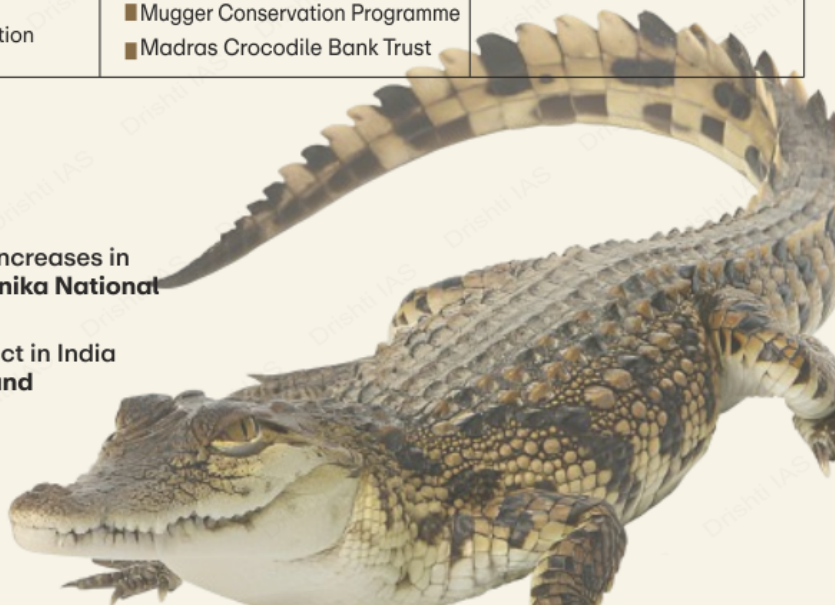
Aspects	Gharial	Mugger/Indian Crocodile	Saltwater Crocodile
Scientific Name	<i>Gavialis Gangeticus</i> 	<i>Crocodylus Palustris</i> 	<i>Crocodylus Porosus</i> 
Distribution: India	<b>Viable Population:</b> National Chambal Sanctuary (U.P, Raj, M.P) <b>Small Non-Breeding Population:</b> Son, Gandak, Hooghly,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

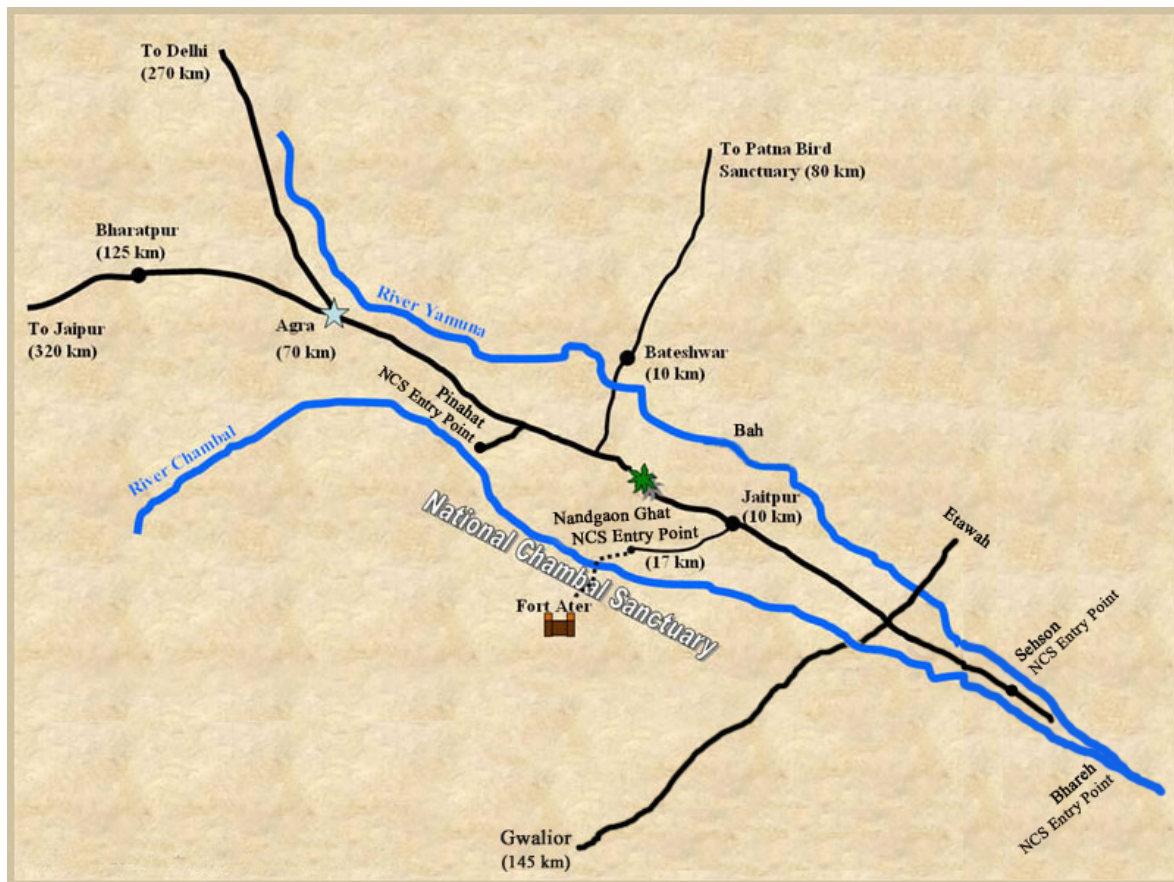


Drishti IAS



**National Chambal Sanctuary**

- It was set up in 1979 as a riverine sanctuary along an approximately 425 km length of the Chambal River.
- Its ravines stretch over 2-6 km wide along the [Chambal River](#) near the tri-point of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- The National Chambal Sanctuary is listed as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and is a proposed [Ramsar site](#).



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