



50 Years of Crocodile Conservation Project and World Crocodile Day

[Source: TH](#)

On [World Crocodile Day \(17th June\)](#), India commemorates 50 years of its **Crocodile Conservation Project (CCP) (1975-2025)**, with Odisha emerging as the epicentre of this pioneering ecological effort.

- **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*)).
- **Crocodile Conservation Project:** India launched its CCP at Odisha's [Bhitarkanika National Park](#) with support from [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.
- **Crocodiles:** They are the **largest surviving reptiles**, primarily inhabit 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).
 - Their survival is threatened by habitat destruction, egg predation, poaching, dam construction, and sand mining.
- **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**.
 - The saltwater crocodile population has recovered to about 2,500, mainly in **Bhitarkanika**, **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**, and the **Sundarbans**.

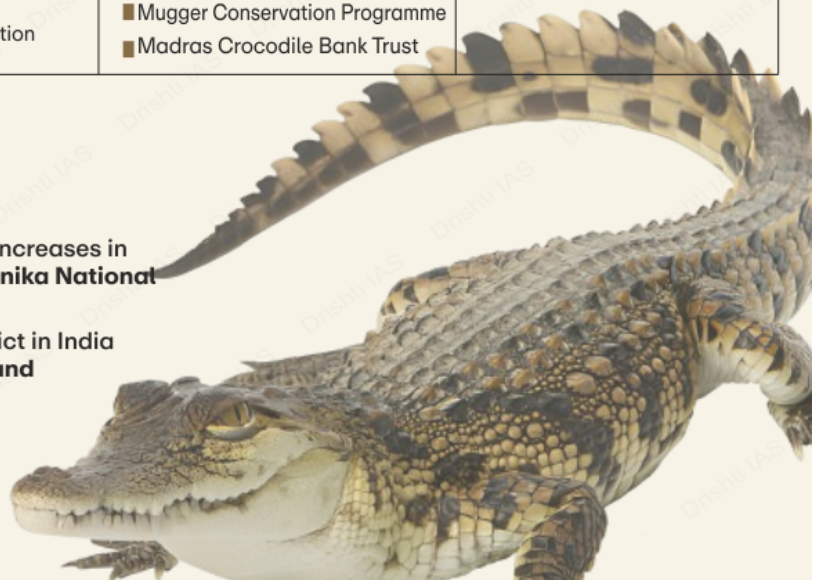
CROCODILE SPECIES IN INDIA

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	Viable Population: National Chambal Sanctuary (U.P, Raj, M.P) Small Non-Breeding Population: 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



Read more: [World Crocodile Day](#)

