



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).

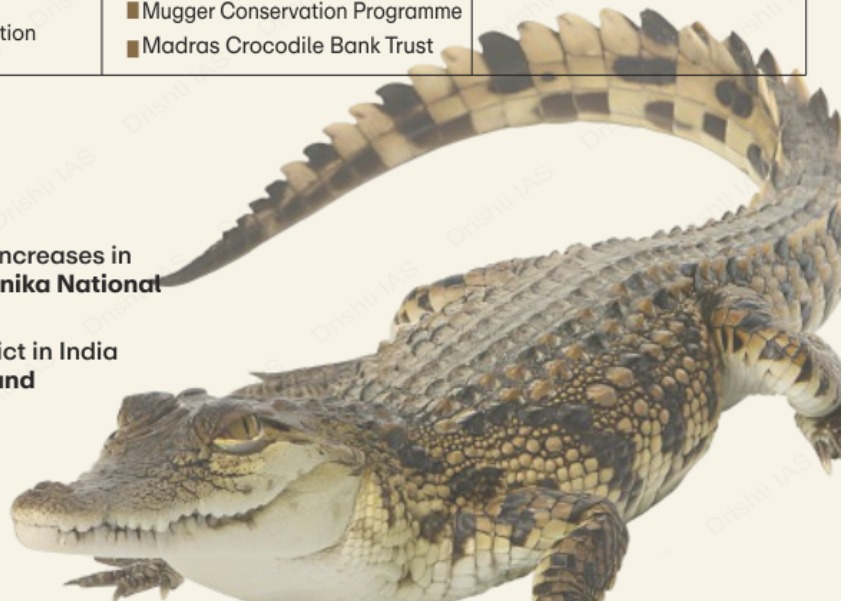
CROCODILE SPECIES IN INDIA

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	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

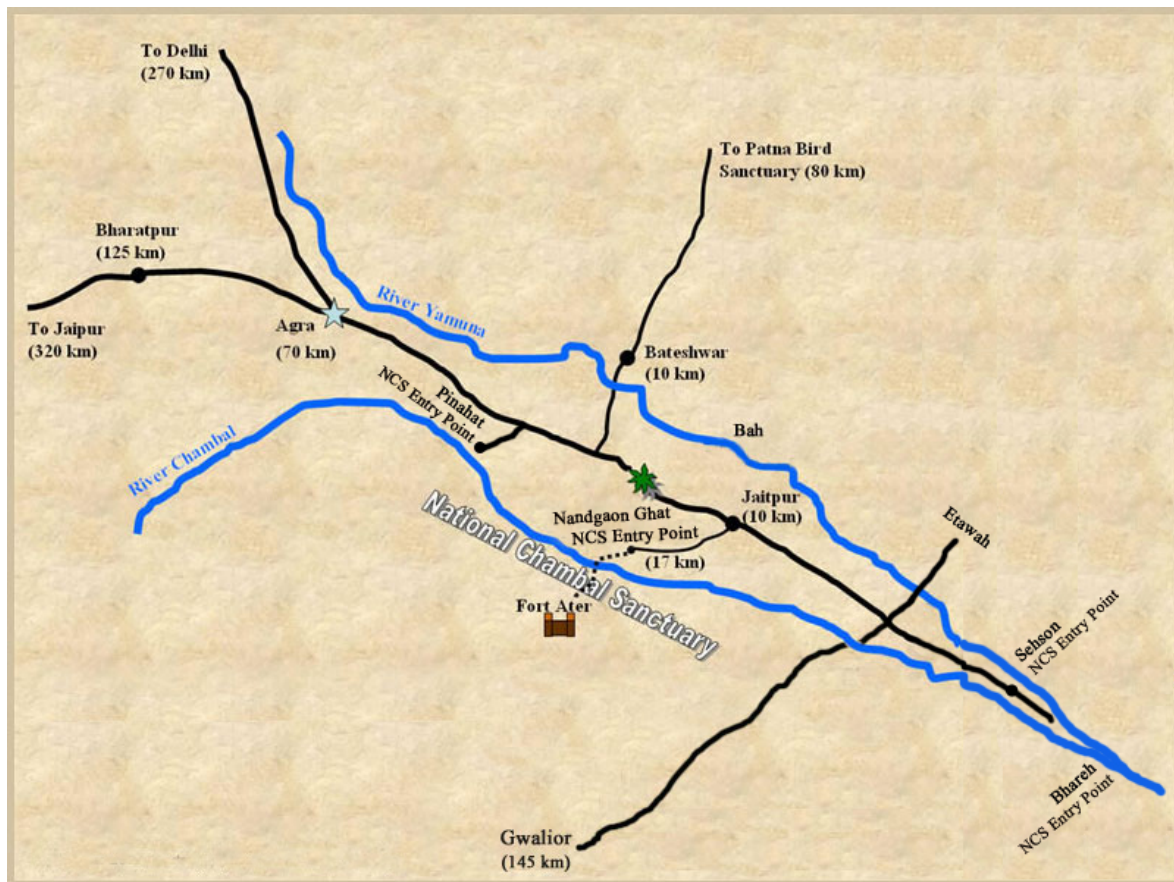
MISCELLANEOUS FACTS

- ➞ **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



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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