

## Gharials

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### Gharials Latest News

Recently, 31 gharial hatchlings have been released in the Bagaha area along the Gandak River in Bihar.

### About Gharials

- It is a **freshwater crocodile** belonging to the Crocodylia Order and Crocodylidae Family.
- The name 'gharial' comes from the **Hindi word ghara**, meaning pot or vessel, referring to the **bulbous snout tip of adult males**, which resembles an inverted pot.
- **Habitat Preference:** Gharials inhabit deep, clear, freshwater rivers with sandy banks, primarily within Himalayan river systems.
- **Distribution:** It is mainly found in the rivers of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.
- Their major population occurs in three **tributaries of the Ganga River**: the Chambal (**Hosts the largest wild population**) and Girwa Rivers in India and the Rapti-Naryani River in Nepal.
- The **Gharial reserves of India** are located in three States: **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan**.

- **Diet: Predominantly piscivorous**, gharials play a key role in regulating fish diversity and maintaining riverine ecological balance.

## Features of Gharials

- It is one of the **largest crocodilians**.
- They have thick skin covered with smooth epidermal scales that do not overlap.
- The **snout of the gharial** is uniquely the **thinnest and most elongated** among all the crocodilians.
- In addition, the adult **males sport a large bulb** at the tip of their snout, called the 'ghara'.
- It is also the most aquatic of all crocodilians, for it never moves far from the water. Individuals typically only leave the water to bask and nest on sandbanks.
- **Reproduction:** They mate during November-January and lay eggs March-May.

## Conservation Status of Gharials

- **IUCN Red List:** Critically endangered
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife Protection Act 1972:** Schedule I.

**Source: IT**

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