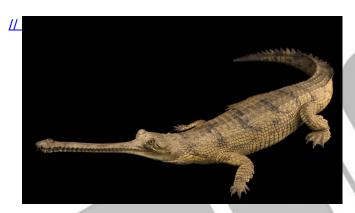


Gharials

Why in News

Recently, the Department of Punjab Forest and Wildlife Preservation, in collaboration with the <u>World-Wide</u> <u>Fund for Nature-India</u> (**WWF-India**) has released a lot of **24 gharials** (**Gavialis Gangeticus**) **into the Beas** Conservation Reserve.

 The gharial reintroduction in the Beas Conservation Reserve is an ambitious programme of the Punjab government.





Key Points

About:

- Gharials, sometimes called gavials, are a type of Asian crocodilian distinguished by their long, thin snouts. Crocodilians are a group of **reptiles** that includes crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and more.
- India has three species of Crocodilians namely:
 - Gharial (Gavialis gangeticus): IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered
 - Mugger crocodile (Crocodylus palustris): IUCN- Vulnerable.
 - Saltwater crocodile (Crocodylus porosus): IUCN- Least Concern.
 - All the three are listed on **Appendix I of <u>CITES</u>** and **Schedule I of the** <u>Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.</u>
 - **Exception**: Saltwater Crocodile populations of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are included in **Appendix II of CITES**.
- Habitat of Gharials:
 - Natural Habitat: Fresh waters of the northern part of India.
 - **Primary Habitat: Chambal river** (a tributary of Yamuna).
 - **Secondary Habitat:** Ghagra, Gandak river, Girwa river (Uttar Pradesh), the Ramganga river (Uttarakhand) and the Sone river (Bihar).
- **Significance:** Population of Gharials are a good indicator of clean river water.

Conservation Efforts:

• Breeding Centres of Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).

Threats:

- Increased river pollution, dam construction, massive-scale fishing operations and floods.
- Illegal sand mining and poaching.

Beas Conservation Reserve

- It is a 185-kilometre stretch of the Beas River located primarily in the north-west of the State of Punjab.
- The Reserve also hosts the only known population in India of the endangered <u>Indus River</u> <u>Dolphin (Platanista gangetica minor).</u>



• In 2017, a programme was initiated to re-introduce the critically endangered gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) with 47 individuals released into the River 30 years after their disappearance.

Beas River

- It originates **near the Rohtang Pass, at a height of 4,062 m** above sea level, on the southern end of the **Pir Panjal Range**, **close to the source of the Ravi**. It is a tributary of the Indus river.
- It meets the **Satluj river at Harike in Punjab**. It is a comparatively small river which is only 460 km long but lies entirely within the Indian territory.
- It forms a gorge at Kati and Largi in the Dhauladhar range.
- The major tributaries of the Beas River are Bain, Banganga, Luni and Uhal, along with Banner,

Chakki, Gaj, Harla, Mamuni, Parvati, Patlikuhlal, Sainj, Suketi and Tirthan.

Source: IE

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