



Release of Gharials

Why in News

Recently Government of Uttar Pradesh has released **Gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*)** in the **Ghaghara river** for the conservation and protection in natural habitat.

Key Points //



The Vision

- **Natural Habitat:** Fresh waters of the northern part of India.
- Gharials, sometimes called gavials, are a type of Asian crocodylian distinguished by their long, thin snouts which **resembles a pot (*ghara* in Hindi)**.
- **Significance:** Population of Gharials are a **good indicator of clean river water**.
- **Gharials** are a type of Crocodylians that also includes crocodiles, alligators, caimans, etc. India has **three species of Crocodylians namely:**
 - **Gharial** (*Gavialis gangeticus*): [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)- **Critically Endangered**.
 - [Mugger crocodile](#) (*Crocodylus palustris*): IUCN- Vulnerable
 - [Saltwater crocodile](#) (*Crocodylus porosus*): IUCN- Least Concern
- In comparison to Crocodiles, Gharials are very shy and unharmed species.
- **Primary Habitat: Chambal river**
 - The Chambal originates at the **Singar Chouri peak** in the northern slopes of the Vindhya mountains (Indore, Madhya Pradesh).
 - It joins the Yamuna River in **Etawah District of UP**.
 - **Tributaries:** Banas, Kali Sindh, Parbati.
 - The **National Chambal Sanctuary** is located along river Chambal on the tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. It is known for critically endangered gharials, the [red-crowned roof turtle](#), and the [endangered Ganges river dolphin](#).
- **Secondary Habitat:** Ghaghra and Gandak river, Girwa river (Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh), the Ramganga river in Jim Corbett National Park and the Sone river.
- **Status:** Gharials are **critically endangered** in the [International Union for Conservation of](#)

Nature Red List of Species.

- Listed under **Schedule I** of the [Wild Life \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#).
- Listed on **Appendix I** of [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#).
- **Conservation Efforts:** Breeding Centres of **Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre** in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, **National Chambal Sanctuary** (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).
- **Threats:**
 - Gharials **prefer sandbanks** as suitable habitats. Wild animals as well as humans often destroy their eggs.
 - Increased **river pollution, dam construction, massive-scale fishing operations and floods.**
 - Illegal sand mining and poaching.

Ghaghara River

- It acts as an important aquatic corridor for gharials in Uttar Pradesh.
- Its source is near **Gurla Mandhata peak, south of Mansarovar** in Tibet.
- It is known as the **Karnali** in Western Nepal.
- It's important tributaries are the **Sarda, the Sarju (Ayodhya is located on its bank) and the Rapti.**
- The Ghaghara joins the Ganga a few kilometres downstream of **Chhapra in Bihar.**
- After reaching the plain area, its stream gets divided into many branches of which, Koriyab and Garwa are important.
- The river bed is sandy and sudden bends start occurring in the stream.

[Source:DTE](#)

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