

Gharials of India

Gharial, also known as the gavial, is a species of crocodilian native to the Indian subcontinent. They are characterized by their long, slender snout and unique teeth, which are tightly packed and resemble a comb.

Origin

The gharial's ancestry can be traced back to the early Eocene period, approximately 56 million years ago. Over time, the gharial evolved into its distinct form and became well-adapted to its freshwater habitat in the rivers and streams of the Indian subcontinent. Gharials are believed to have once been widespread throughout the Indian subcontinent, but their range has since declined significantly.

Population and distribution in India

The gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) is a species of crocodilian that is native to the Indian subcontinent. Historically, gharials were widely distributed throughout the region, including in the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Mahanadi river systems. However, due to a variety of threats, including habitat loss, overhunting, and the introduction of dams and other river management projects, gharial populations have declined dramatically over the past century. By the mid-20th century, the species was considered critically endangered, with an estimated population of just a few hundred individuals. Since then, conservation efforts have been undertaken to help protect and recover gharial populations, and the species has made a modest recovery. According to the most recent estimates, the gharial population in India is now estimated to be around 1,000-1,200 individuals, with a few

hundred more individuals in Nepal.

In India, they are found in the Chambal river in good numbers. The national park has helped to conserve these reptiles and increase the numbers.

Despite this recovery, gharials are still considered vulnerable to extinction and continued efforts to conserve and protect their habitats are necessary to ensure the species' long-term survival. In India, gharials are now found in a number of protected areas, including national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, where efforts are underway to protect and restore their habitats.

Protected Areas

There are some of the key protected areas for gharials in India .

National Chambal Sanctuary: This sanctuary, located along the Chambal River in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, is one of the largest protected areas for gharials in India and is considered an important stronghold for the species.

Valmiki National Park is a park, located in the state of Bihar, is one of the largest protected areas for gharials in India and is home to a significant population of the species.

Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary is a sanctuary, located along the Chambal River in the state of Madhya Pradesh, is another important stronghold for gharials and is home to a significant population of the species.

Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary is a sanctuary, located in the state of Bihar, is another important protected area for gharials and is home to a significant population of the species.

Panna National Park is a park, located in the state of Madhya Pradesh, is also home to a significant population of gharials and is considered an important protected area for the species.

In addition to these protected areas, there are also a number of other smaller protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries throughout India that provide habitat for gharials and are important for the conservation of the species. These include the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh, the Sonbhadra Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh, and the Orang National Park in Assam.