

Odisha's Kendrapara, India's only district to have all 3 species of crocodilians

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In news- Odisha's Kendrapara is the only district in India to be home to all three species of crocodilians found in the country.

Key updates-

- This has been declared after forest officials found a baby gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) in the Paika river of the **Bhitarkanika National Park**, located in the district.
- The National Park is also the home of saltwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*).
- In October, 2016, the forest department had rescued a live 12-foot-long mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*) from a fishing net in the Luna river.
- The gharial and saltwater crocodile conservation programme was first implemented in Odisha in early 1975 and subsequently, the mugger conservation programme was initiated.
- In 1975, the Union ministry of forest and environment, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, had started a crocodile breeding and rearing project in Dangamala within the Bhitarkanika.

Types of crocodiles in India-

Gharial-

- It is **found in clear freshwater river** systems, congregating at river bends where the water is deeper.
- Also called as gavials, they are a type of Asian crocodilian distinguished by their **long, thin snouts**.

- They congregate to mate and make nests during the dry season, when females lay eggs in sandbanks along slow-moving sections of water.
- These animals **do not stalk and lunge at prey like other crocodilians**.
- Their snouts contain sensory cells that can detect vibrations in the water.
- It is found mostly in Himalayan rivers.
- IUCN status: **Critically Endangered**

Saltwater Crocodile-

- It is the **earth's largest living Crocodilian**.
- It inhabits **coastal brackish mangrove swamps and river deltas**.
- The saltwater crocodile has a **wide snout compared to most crocodiles**.
- IUCN Status: **Least Concern**

Mugger-

- The mugger crocodile is also called marsh crocodile, a broad-snouted crocodile.
- It is principally **restricted to the Indian subcontinent** where it may be found in a number of **freshwater** habitat types including rivers, lakes and marshes.
- Females dig holes in the sand as nesting sites and lay up to 46 eggs during the dry season.
- Sex of hatchlings depends on temperature during incubation.
- Its visual, hearing and smelling senses are acute.
- IUCN status: **Vulnerable**

June 17 is celebrated as **World Crocodile day**. It is a global awareness campaign to highlight the plight of endangered crocodiles and alligators around the world.