

## World Crocodile Day

*Prelims: Current events of National Importance and International Importance | Conservation*

### Why in News?

*World Crocodile Day, celebrated recently, commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's Crocodile conservation project.*

- World Crocodile Day is celebrated annually on **June 17<sup>th</sup>** to raise awareness about the conservation of crocodiles and alligators.
- It is an initiative of the Belize-based Crocodile Research Alliance.

### India's Crocodile Conservation Project

- **Started in** - 1975 in Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park.
- **Species in India** - The 3 main species of crocodiles are found in India,
  - Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*),
  - Mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), and
  - Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*).
- **Role of Odisha in Conservation** - Odisha is the **only State** to host the wild populations of all three native species gharial, saltwater crocodile and mugger.
- Incubation and rearing centres were immediately established in Odisha for gharials at Tikarpada on the Mahanadi River and saltwater crocodiles at Dangamal in Bhitarkanika.
- Uttar Pradesh followed with centres at Kukrail (Lucknow) and Katarnia Ghat along the Girwa River.
- India holds nearly **80% of the global wild gharial** population.
- **Nesting sites** - National Chambal Sanctuary (spanning three States), Katarnia Ghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Gandak River, Corbett Tiger Reserve, and Son Gharial Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.
- The saltwater crocodile population has recovered in the wild, with Bhitarkanika in Odisha holding the largest share, followed by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Sundarbans.
- The mugger crocodile, once severely depleted in numbers, has now reclaimed most of its historical range.

### Reference

[The Hindu | World Crocodile Day](#)



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