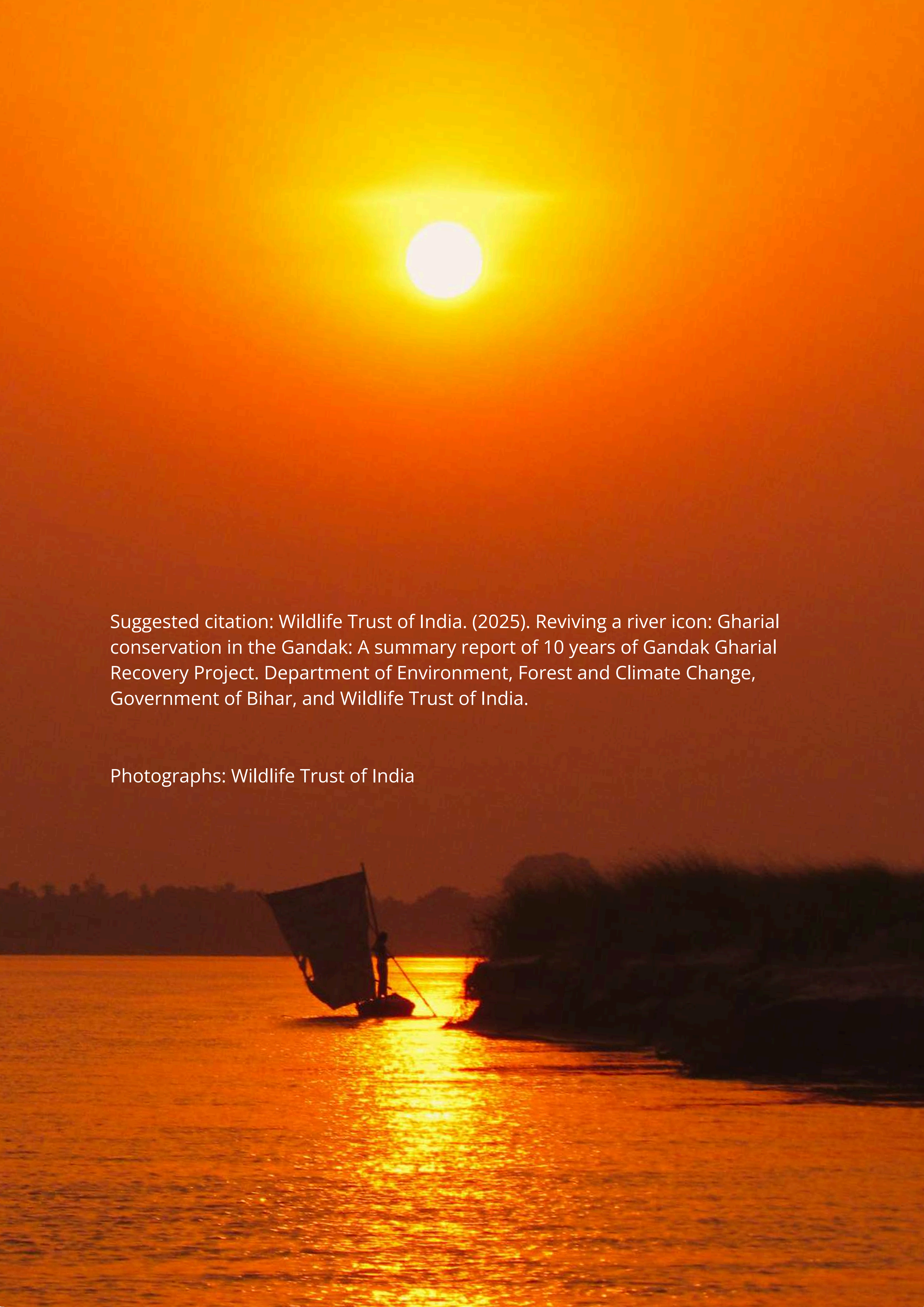
Government of Bihar
Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Gandak Gharial Recovery Project
10 Years

Reviving a River Icon
Gharial Conservation in the Gandak

2025

WTI
wti.org.in



Suggested citation: Wildlife Trust of India. (2025). Reviving a river icon: Gharial conservation in the Gandak: A summary report of 10 years of Gandak Gharial Recovery Project. Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bihar, and Wildlife Trust of India.

Photographs: Wildlife Trust of India

Government of Bihar

Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Dr. Sunil Kumar

Hon'ble Minister

Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Government of Bihar

message

Bihar has a profound legacy of AHIMSA and KARUNA towards all living beings, forming the foundation of harmony between humans, animals, and nature. Endowed with rivers that crisscross its geography, the state draws its lifeline from these waterways. They not only sustain millions of people but also nurture a myriad of life forms essential for ecological balance.

The Gandak River—entering Bihar at Valmikinagar and merging with the Ganga opposite Patna—has long been celebrated for its cultural and mythological significance. In recent years, however, it has also gained recognition for the conservation of the gharial, a member of the crocodilian family popularly known as the fish-eating crocodile. On the brink of extinction in the Gandak a decade ago, the species has made a remarkable recovery—thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bihar, in partnership with the Wildlife Trust of India. Through scientific interventions and community engagement, this population has now grown to become the second largest after that of the Chambal River.

I am deeply heartened by the invaluable contribution of local communities—particularly farmers and fishermen—in safeguarding this species. Equally inspiring are the coordinated efforts of department officials, departmental staff, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders, whose collective commitment has created a model of conservation that every nature lover can take pride in.

This booklet encapsulates a decade-long journey of perseverance, science, and stewardship that has led to the recovery of this Critically Endangered species.

I congratulate the team on producing this concise publication.

Government of Bihar
Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

message

Sri Anand Kishor, I.A.S.
Principal Secretary
Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of Bihar

The State of Bihar is blessed with numerous rivers that provide water security and sustain livelihoods across a vast landscape of India. Among them, the Gandak—a Himalayan River—holds immense significance for the people of north Bihar, serving as a vital source of livelihood for thousands of families.

Beyond its utilitarian value, the Gandak River nurtures rich biological diversity, including several globally threatened species such as the Critically Endangered Gharial, Endangered Ganges River Dolphin, Vulnerable Marsh Crocodile, and a range of freshwater turtles. Its extensive riverine floodplains also support diverse terrestrial wildlife, including Hog Deer, Nilgai, Wild Pig, Indian Wolf, and Golden Jackal.

Recognizing this ecological importance, the Government of Bihar has prioritized riverine biodiversity conservation in the Gandak. Over the past decade, the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India, has achieved significant milestones in gharial conservation in the river.

This booklet presents the key achievements of these efforts over the last ten years—celebrating not only Bihar's conservation journey but also marking 50 years of crocodilian conservation in India. Kudos to the team for thoughtfully compiling this information.

Government of Bihar
Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Sri Prabhat Kumar Gupta, I.F.S.
Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF)
Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of Bihar

message

Bihar is endowed with a rich diversity of natural habitats that support a wide range of flora and fauna, including several globally threatened species. Among these, aquatic habitats such as wetlands and rivers play a particularly critical role in sustaining aquatic biodiversity. The Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has been proactive in conserving these ecosystems, with Wildlife Trust of India leading active on-ground conservation interventions. Over the past decade, this joint effort has contributed significantly to the recovery of the Gharial in the Gandak River.

The initiative began with an innovative approach that linked ex-situ and in-situ conservation: 30 sub-adult gharials, born and reared at Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park, Patna, were released into their natural habitat in the Gandak River following a scientific assessment of river conditions. The Gandak, with its clean, fast-flowing waters and deep pools, provides an ideal habitat for gharials. In Bihar, a substantial stretch of nearly 300 km is inhabited by the species, accounting for almost one-fourth of its global extent of occurrence across the six major populations worldwide.

Working in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders, the efforts have focused on nest protection and reducing direct threats. As a result, the Gandak River population has grown to become the second largest in the species' range. Sustaining this milestone and improving future conservation prospects will require continued commitment from wildlife managers of the department and all key stakeholders.

This illustrative booklet captures a decade of initiatives and achievements in gharial conservation in the Gandak River and highlights the future actions needed to strengthen and scale up these efforts. I appreciate the efforts of the officials of the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Wildlife Trust of India for bringing out this informative booklet.

foreword

Sri Vivek Menon
Founder & Executive Director
Wildlife Trust of India

The gharial is one of the most iconic symbols of India's riverine biodiversity. Once widespread in Ganges, Mahanadi and Brahmaputra river systems, its population declined drastically during the last century, pushing the species to the brink of extinction. The mighty Himalayan River, the Gandak in Bihar - with its clean waters and deep pools - now stands as a symbol of both the challenges and possibilities of riverine species recovery. The river that once served as a source of eggs for India's gharial head-starting programme was almost bereft of the species, as revealed by a survey in 2010, supported by Wildlife Trust of India which found only about a dozen individuals surviving in its over 300 km in Bihar.

The political will of the state, combined with proactive interventions by the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bihar, and WTI, initiated a recovery process for the species. This booklet highlights that decade-long journey of collaboration and scientific interventions—marked by milestones such as releasing captive-reared gharials from Patna Zoo, protecting nesting sites, engaging communities, and reducing direct threats. Today, the Gandak supports the second largest gharial population across its global range—one of the most remarkable recoveries of a Critically Endangered species in India.

This achievement reminds us that with dedication, collaboration, and vision, species can be brought back from near extinction. At the same time, it underlines the urgent need for sustained efforts to secure this progress and work towards downlisting the species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

preface

The gharial (Gavialis gangeticus), an endemic species of the Indian subcontinent, has faced severe threats across its range, leading to local extinctions and highly fragmented populations at just 14 sites globally—comprising six major and eight minor populations. Listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of threatened Species since 2007, the species has faced a precarious survival. The Gandak River in Bihar was historically known to host gharials, but until a detailed river survey was conducted in 2010, little was known about the population's status. The alarming findings of this survey galvanized the State Government and the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, along with conservation organizations, to initiate the Gandak Gharial Recovery Project in 2014-15.

The Wildlife Trust of India partnered with the Department to spearhead this effort, adopting a rigorous scientific approach in releasing gharial individuals in the river, post-release monitoring and in-situ nest protection to improve breeding success. Local community participation was at the heart of this initiative, ensuring both awareness and stewardship. Over the past decade, the project has successfully released 30 captive-born and reared gharials and safeguarded nearly 900 hatchlings through in-situ nest monitoring and protective measures. Intensive sensitization of local communities and frontline forest department staff has also helped reduce direct threats to gharials and other aquatic fauna to a significant extent.

The Gandak River today supports a thriving gharial population, with a minimum of 372 individuals recorded in 2025—a remarkable recovery that stands as a testimony to sustained collaboration and dedication. Moving forward, the project aims to strengthen both ex-situ and in-situ interventions, focusing on enhancing breeding success, providing protection for critical river stretches, and nurturing the next generation of gharial stewards among young forest officers, local communities, and researchers.

Prof. B. C. Choudhury
Project Investigator
Gandak Gharial Recovery Project

Dr. Samir Kumar Sinha
Co-Project Investigator
Gandak Gharial Recovery Project

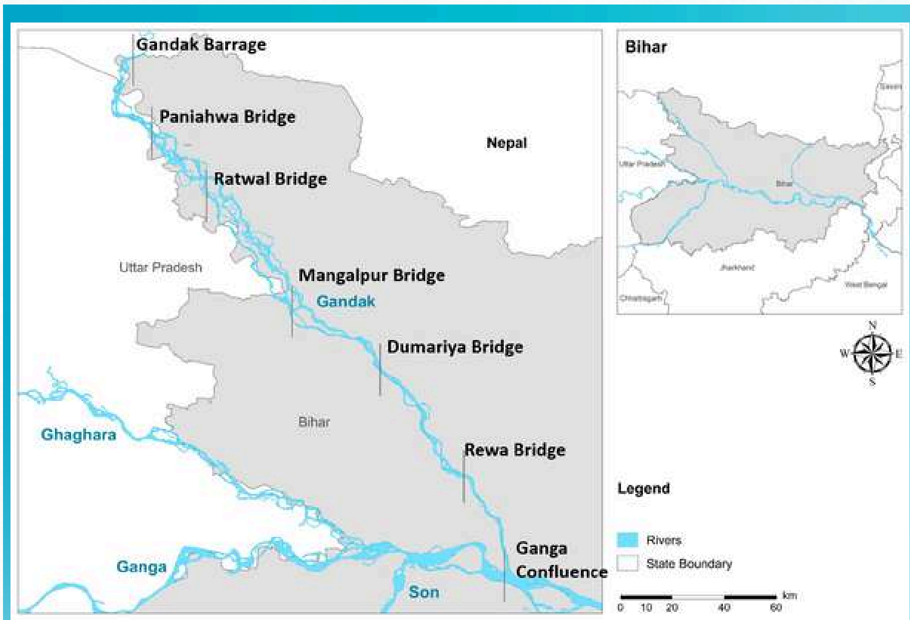
The Gandak is one of the ancient rivers of North India, flowing even before the Himalayas rose to their present form. With its high discharge and frequent floods, its wetlands, mid-channel islands, and sandbars create rich habitats, serving as vital sites for gharial and other aquatic animals.

The Gandak River

A Living Cradle of Culture and Conservation

The Gandak River—a mighty river from the Himalayas—is a northern tributary of the holy Ganga River. Known as the Narayani in Nepal, it enters India at Valmikinagar in Bihar's West Champaran district, where a barrage was built in the 1960s for irrigation and power generation. Flowing for around 330 km in India, the river passes through the districts of West Champaran, East Champaran, Gopalganj, Saran, Muzaffarpur, and Vaishali before merging with the Ganga at Hajipur, opposite Patna, the State Capital of Bihar.

This river is not only important for water, agriculture and biodiversity—it is also deeply sacred in Indian mythology. According to the Hindu mythology, the Gandak originates from the feet of Lord Vishnu, and the rare Shaligram Shila found in its riverbed is worshipped as a divine symbol of Vishnu. The river is mentioned in many ancient scriptures, including the Puranas. It is also believed to be the site of the famous Gajendra Mokshastory, where Lord Vishnu saved the elephant king from a crocodile and granted him liberation.



The Gandak's rich biodiversity, cultural heritage, and spiritual significance make it a river truly worth conserving—for the well-being of both people and biodiversity.

The Gandak River once supported a healthy population of the critically endangered Gharial—a fish-eating crocodile found only in the Indian subcontinent. While its upstream stretch in Nepal was well known for gharials, very little was known about its population downstream in India. The construction of the barrage likely affected their numbers. Yet, the Gandak played a historic role in Gharial conservation—in 1975, eggs collected from this river helped start India's first captive breeding and release program at the Gharial Conservation Unit in Tikarpada, Odisha. Today, the Gandak is recognized by the IUCN as one of six major gharial habitats in the world, after concerted efforts have been made by the Wildlife Trust of India with the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bihar.

The Gharial

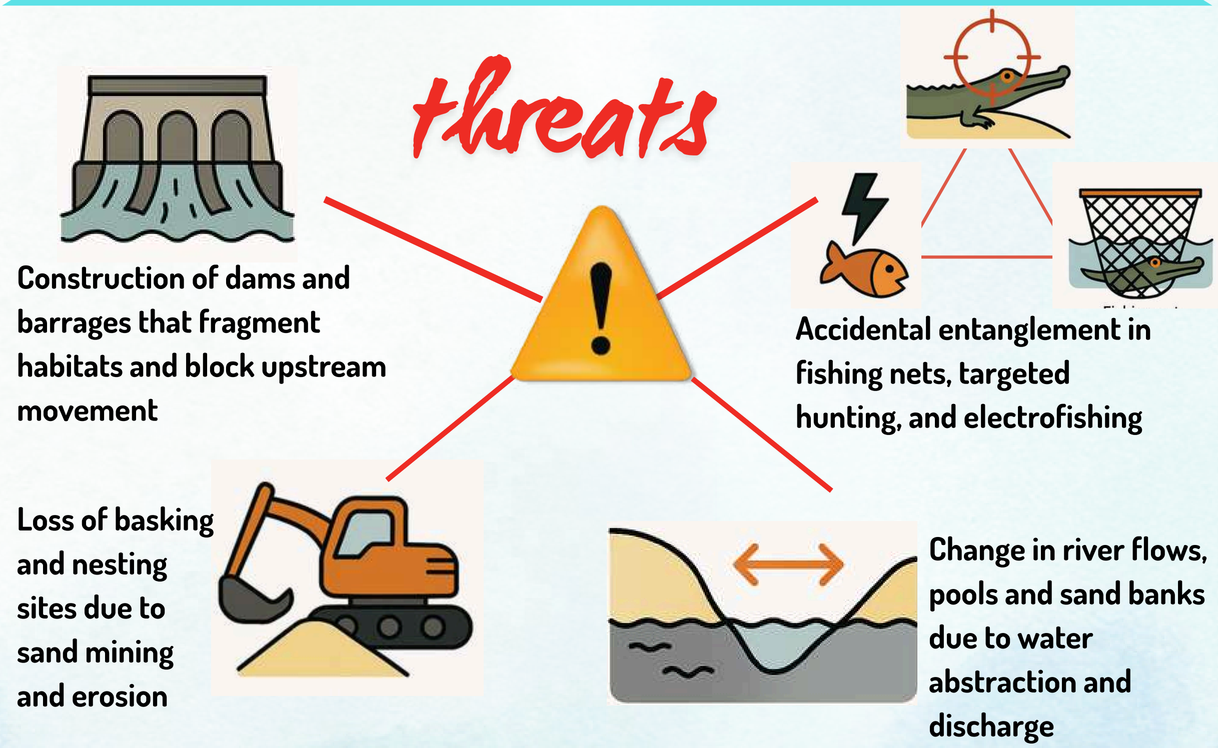
A Critically Endangered Crocodilian Endemic to the Indian Subcontinent

The gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) is one of the world's 24 crocodilian species, found only in the Indian subcontinent. Once widespread across major rivers like the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Mahanadi, its population has shrunk drastically, now surviving in just 14 isolated river stretches in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Between 1946 and 2006, the global population of Gharials declined by approximately 98%, with a 58% drop in the adult population recorded between 1997 and 2006. This alarming trend led to its classification as Critically Endangered in 2007. The most recent IUCN assessment in 2019 showed signs of recovery, estimating about 650 breeding adult individuals globally.

Gharials inhabit deep, fast-flowing rivers and are specialist fish-eaters. They rely on specific riverine habitats, such as deep pools for foraging and mid-channel sandbanks for basking and nesting. As cold-blooded reptiles, they require regular sun-basking to regulate body temperature. Nesting demands high, undisturbed sandbanks.

Gharials are non-aggressive and not a threat to human being.



In Bihar, Gharials have historically been reported from the Ghaghara, Gandak, Kosi, Mahananda, and Ganga rivers. Currently, the most significant population exists in the Gandak River, one of six major global subpopulations, supporting active breeding. Hunting records from the Kosi River in the 1960s also indicate once-thriving populations. More recently, researchers have recorded a remnant population in the river.

Gharial Recovery

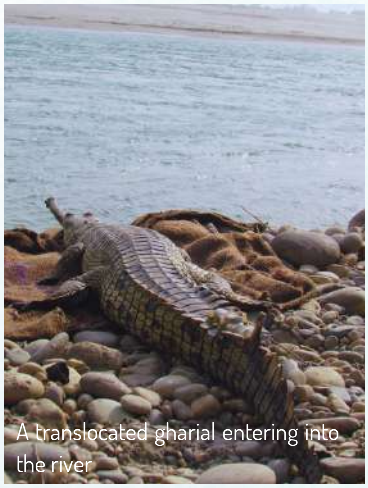
Steps That Shaped a Conservation Success

The first comprehensive survey of the Gandak River stretch in Bihar—from Valmikinagar to Sonepur (~320 km) —was undertaken in 2010 by a group of conservation organizations under the aegis of the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (DEFCC), Bihar. The survey assessed the population status of key aquatic species, including the Gharial, Ganges River Dolphin, and Otters.

A major outcome of the survey was the identification of a small, relict population of Gharials—estimated at just 10-15 individuals—which highlighted the need for urgent conservation action. Based on the survey's recommendations, the State Board for Wildlife approved the release of sub-adult Gharials bred at Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park in 2012.


Gharials in enclosure in Patna Zoo

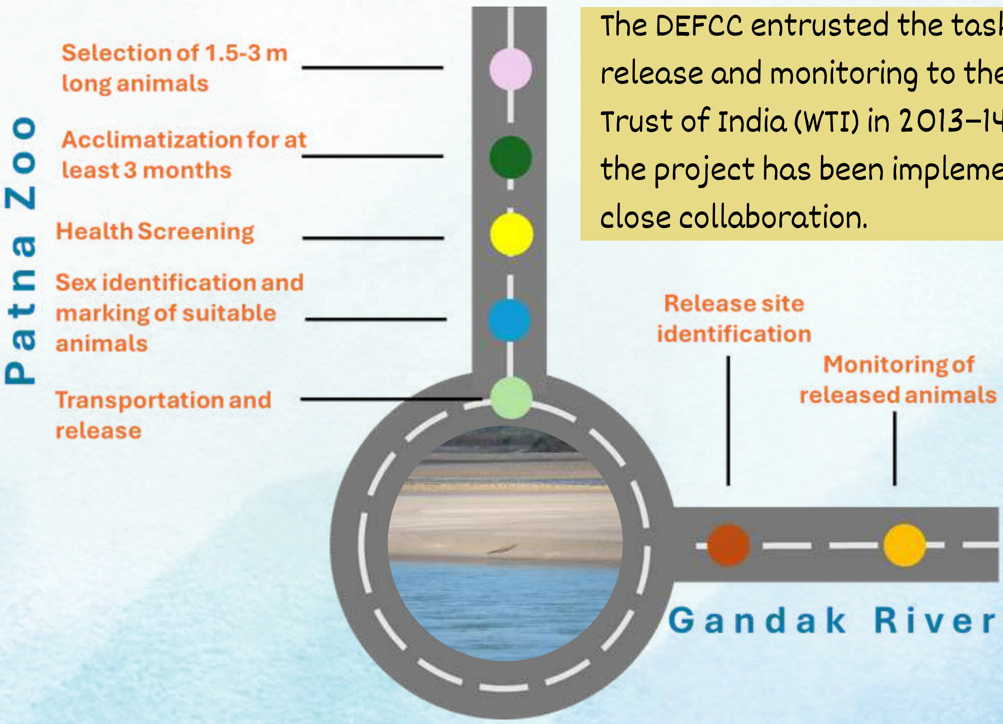
Patna Zoo and WTI team members with gharial transportation vehicle


A translocated gharial entering into the river


River survey for release site selection


Gharials ready for release after transportation

The DEFCC entrusted the task of Gharial release and monitoring to the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) in 2013-14. Since then, the project has been implemented in close collaboration.



The released gharials were monitored not only in the Gandak River, but also in other major rivers such as the Ghaghara and Kosi, based on cues from the long-range movements of radio-tagged individuals. Marked individuals—identified by clipped tail scutes—were sighted and photographed, confirming their survival. During monitoring, gharials released in Nepal's Narayani and Rapti Rivers were also recorded in the Gandak, where they appeared to have settled due to the suitability of the habitat.

30 sub-adult Gharials (27 females and 3 males) released in 2014-15

6 gharials were fitted with radio and satellite tags for post release monitoring

- **One female moved approximately 420 km to the Sone River.**
- **Another female traveled nearly 1,000 km from the release site to the Mahananda River.**

- **18 of the 30 released gharials were sighted within 18 months of release**
- **One gharial was recorded upstream, having crossed the barrage post-release.**

The released gharials were monitored not only in the Gandak River, but also in other major rivers such as the Ghaghara and Kosi, based on cues from the long-range movements of radio-tagged individuals. Marked individuals—identified by clipped tail scutes—were sighted and photographed, confirming their survival. During monitoring, gharials released in Nepal's Narayani and Rapti Rivers were also recorded in the Gandak, where they appeared to have settled due to the suitability of the habitat.

River surveys conducted in 2015 to monitor the species recorded year-old Gharial hatchlings, confirming successful breeding in the river system. Building on this, the project in 2016 expanded its focus to include the identification and protection of nesting sites, with six nests detected that year. These nests are often threatened by riverbank erosion caused by rainfall or water discharge from the barrage. Since then, the project has prioritized nest protection through the active involvement of local nest watchers.


20 नन्हें मेहमानों ने घड़ियालों के बसेरों में बढ़ाई रौनक

गंडक तट पर इनके संरक्षण के लिए चल रही कोशिश रंग लाई


Gandak River in Bihar becomes 3rd breeding ground for gharials


Gandak is now Gharial breeding site

A TEAM OF EXPERTS HAVE BEEN RELEASING CAPTIVE-BRED GHARIALS INTO THE WILD AND INTO RIVER GANDAK

GROWING NUMBERS

Nest Protection: Key to Gharial Recovery

Nest protection begins with identifying gharial breeding congregation sites through river surveys conducted from early to mid-February. These sites are regularly monitored by local community volunteers and WTI biologists. Female gharials begin trial nesting in late March to early April, followed by actual nesting and egg-laying. The Gharial Project team locates active nests and assigns nest watchers from local communities to monitor them against depredation, erosion, and trampling. Frontline forest department staff also extend support to this effort. Nests located in erosion-prone areas are carefully relocated away from the riverbank into hand-dug nests by trained team members. These relocated nests are monitored through to successful hatching (after 60-70 days of incubation), which is assisted by the project team. Hatchlings are released into the river, near the mother, who often remains nearby awaiting for them.

The Symphony of New Life in Gharials!

Mature gharial embryos cannot hatch through the sand layer on their own. The mother gharial returns to the nest, pats the sand, and, upon hearing the embryos' chirping response, scrapes away the sand to help them emerge. The chirp indicates the maturity of embryos. In the case of shifted nests, biologists take on this role—gently patting the nest and removing the sand upon hearing the chirping—just like a mother gharial—to assist the hatchlings in safely emerging.

875

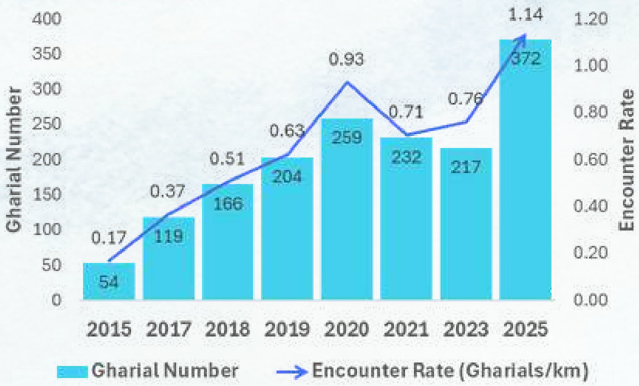
hatchlings released

Scan to Listen Gharial Baby Chirp

Photos: (Clockwise from top) WTI team conducting a gharial survey in the Gandak River; survey team camping along the riverbank; monitoring a radio-tagged gharial from the riverbank; and gharial observation from the river bank..

The river surveys were conducted using an inflatable motorized raft by a team of two biologists, two field assistants, and a boatman. Two observers scanned the river with binoculars and photographed each gharial sighted. For every sighting, data on geographic coordinates, approximate body-length, sex, group-size, water-depth, basking site substratum, and nearby human activities were recorded. Additionally, habitat characteristics and anthropogenic activities were systematically documented across each 2-km river segment.

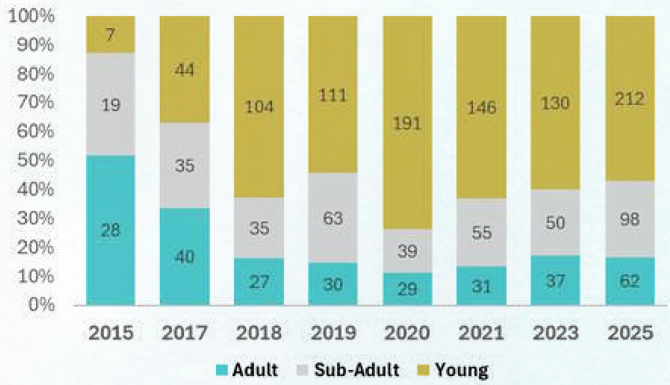
Gharial population in the Gandak River



Gharial population trends in the Gandak over the past 10 years

The project conducts annual population monitoring surveys, recording the number of gharials sighted—a figure that depends heavily on basking behavior. Variations in survey timing and ambient temperature during the survey period can influence sighting numbers. Over the past 10 years, the gharial population has increased by 589%. The encounter rate (number of gharials per km) has risen from 0.17 to 1.14 gharials/km, reflecting a 571% increase.

Gharials sighted during the surveys were classified into five age classes based on estimated total body length: hatchlings (≤60 cm), yearlings (>61–120 cm), juveniles (>121–180 cm), sub-adults (>181–270 cm), and adults (>271 cm). Over the years, the age-class composition has shifted noticeably, with a substantial increase in the proportion of young gharials (hatchlings, yearlings, and juveniles) in the recorded population. This trend reflects successful breeding, supported by nest protection and hatchling release under the project.



Proportion of gharials in different age-classes recorded during surveys over the past 10 years
(Data labels on the graph represent the number of individuals)

- ***The River Gandak currently supports the second-largest gharial population after the Chambal River, which flows through Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.***
- ***The adult gharial population in the Gandak River constitutes approximately 10% of the global adult population, as assessed by the IUCN (2019).***
- ***Gharial's extent of occurrence in the Gandak River (~300 km) represents nearly one-fourth of the total extent across the six major global gharial populations.***

Sustaining the Recovery

Key Challenges to Address and Strategic Responses

While gharials find suitable habitats in the Gandak, they also face challenging conditions that affect their survival. Globally, gharial nests are vulnerable to threats such as depredation by jackals and dogs, egg poaching, trampling by domestic livestock, riverbank cultivation, and sand mining. Fortunately, in the Gandak, most of these threats are either absent or pose minimal challenges. Here, the primary concern is nest erosion caused by increased river flow, triggered by sudden water releases from the barrage or intense rainfall in the catchment over a short period. To address this, the project initiated in-situ nest relocation, moving vulnerable nests to safer sites away from the riverbank.

In 2021, an abrupt rise in water levels caused flooding that submerged even the rescued and relocated nests, underscoring the need for an ex-situ incubation and hatchling-rearing facility. The proposed center, to be established with the support of Los Angeles Zoo, and Botanical Gardens, will rescue vulnerable nests and hatch them in a controlled environment, thereby improving hatching success. Hatchlings will be released back into the river after the monsoon, reducing the natural mortality that often occurs during floods.

Mortality of Fully Developed Gharial Embryos Due to Nest Flooding

Vulnerability of Nesting Success to Extreme Weather

Incessant rains in the catchment during the 2021 nesting season caused floodplain inundation and deposited approximately one foot of sediment (left). This led to the submergence of relocated nest sites (middle) for over 24 hours, resulting in the mortality of fully developed embryos (right).

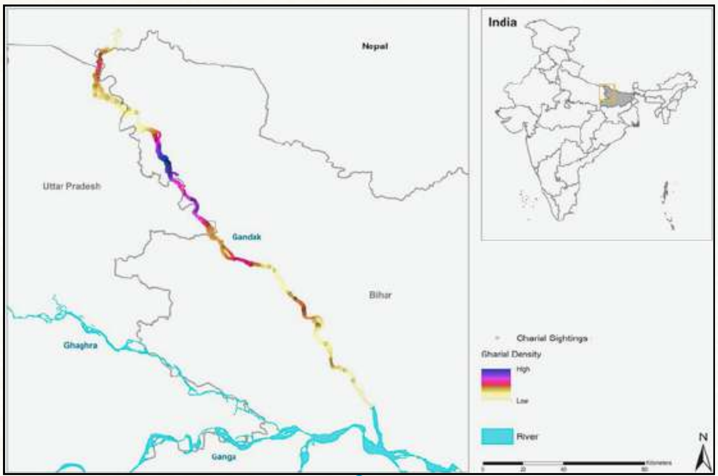
New threats are emerging in the river—some directly impacting gharials, others indirectly degrading their habitat and affecting population health. Electrofishing, poaching of birds, turtles and herbivores, and activities that alter water flow and change river morphology are among the key concerns. These challenges highlight the need for strengthened protection of the river and its biodiversity-rich sites under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Encouragingly, the process to notify an approximately 140 km stretch of the river, from upstream of Dhanha-Ratwal Bridge to downstream of Sattar Ghat road bridge, as a Conservation Reserve is already underway.

Suitable gharial habitats include fast-flowing rivers with clean water and deep pools (above). Undisturbed mid-channel sandbars serve as breeding congregation sites (middle), while elevated sandbanks are used for nesting (below). River stretches with a higher availability of such features become prime areas for gharial use.

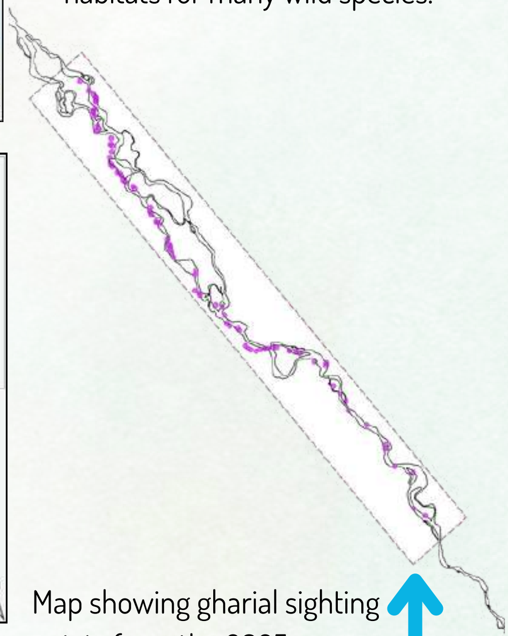
The Gharial Hotspots

Prioritizing the River for Enhanced Protection

Map of the Gandak River showing land use within a 2 km buffer along the riverbank. The majority of the area is under agriculture, interspersed with grasslands and wetlands that provide natural habitats for many wild species.

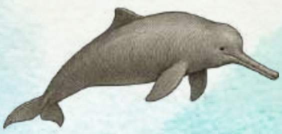


Map of the Gandak River showing relative density of gharial along the river.

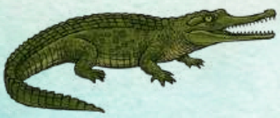


Map showing gharial sighting points from the 2025 survey in the river stretch proposed for Conservation Reserve along the Gandak River.

Key species recorded in the Proposed Conservation Reserve Stretch in January-February 2025



119
individuals



237
individuals

3
species

52
species

Community Support

A Key Driver of Gharial Recovery Success

Source of information and traditional knowledge
The Gandak River and its banks are central to the lives of local communities, providing resources for fishing, farming, fodder collection, navigation, and grazing. This close relationship with the river positions them as natural custodians, with unique insights into its biodiversity. Farmers and fishermen often provide critical information on gharials—such as incidents of entanglement in fishing nets and the locations of nesting sites—making them invaluable partners in conservation.

Support for protection of the river stretch
Local communities have shown remarkable openness and enthusiasm in participating in consultations and discussions on the notification of the Gandak River stretch as a Conservation Reserve. During these dialogues, they have expressed unanimous consent and voiced their conservation aspirations freely and fairly.
This strong community support not only reflects their commitment to protecting the river but also lays a solid foundation for the long-term conservation of the Gandak River and its rich biodiversity.

Protectors of nests
Recognizing the importance of community involvement, the project actively engages local youth as nest watchers. Their vigilance has been instrumental in safeguarding nests, especially during the Covid lockdowns when project staff could not move freely. This partnership ensured that nest protection and relocation efforts continued uninterrupted during a critical time.

Shaping conservation narratives
Awareness materials and collaterals have been used to sensitize communities about the ecological value of river biodiversity and the threats facing the Gandak. Local influencers, respected within their communities, have emerged as key champions in spreading conservation messages and shaping narratives that strengthen support for gharial recovery.

Defenders against illegal activities
Community mobilization has gone beyond awareness, extending into direct action against illicit activities. Local people have played a pivotal role in reducing turtle poaching, a practice particularly prevalent in certain seasons. In several cases, they have apprehended boatmen engaged in electrofishing and handed them over to enforcement authorities, demonstrating their commitment to protecting the river and its biodiversity.

A Glimpse of the Biodiversity of the Gandak and Its Floodplains

Maintaining the lifeline

Free-flowing River, Thriving Biodiversity and Prosperous Communities

The Gandak River remains one of the cleanest rivers in the state, supporting a distinctive assemblage of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Its geomorphological diversity and floodplain habitats make it a vital stronghold of biodiversity. However, this ecological balance is contingent upon maintaining the river's unhindered natural flow.

Strengthening the capacity of key stakeholders to protect, conserve, and manage riverine resources is essential for securing long-term biodiversity benefits. Providing legal protection to critical stretches of the river, together with participatory management approaches, represents one of the most practical and effective ways for ensuring the conservation of the Gandak River and its biodiversity.

The gharial requires not only fast-flowing, clean water but also undisturbed sandbanks and mid-channel islands for basking, nesting and survival. The river's morphology, however, is heavily influenced by the barrage at Valmikinagar. Any further infrastructural development on the river is likely to drastically alter habitat conditions, posing serious threats to the populations of gharials, Ganges River dolphins, and turtles.

The lateral connectivity of the river with floodplain wetlands should be maintained to sustain natural fish population in the river, which will be beneficial for both fish-eating wildlife and the local sustainable fishery. To ensure this ecosystem benefits, conservation of riverine floodplains is also very important.

The rich and unique biodiversity of the Gandak River and its floodplains can serve as the foundation for sustainable, low-impact, community-managed nature tourism. With appropriate policy support and capacity-building for local communities, such initiatives can promote conservation while providing livelihood opportunities.

Acknowledgements

At the outset, we express our deepest gratitude to Shri Nitish Kumar, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar, for his great interest in the conservation of gharials in the Gandak River since the inception of this project.

We remain profoundly indebted to the senior officials of the Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bihar—including the Principal Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Chief Wildlife Warden, and Director (Ecology and Environment)—for their continued guidance and encouragement over the last 10 year.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Director, Deputy Director, Veterinarians, and Range Officers of Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park, Patna, for preparing the gharials for translocation and facilitating the necessary arrangements for safe transport to the Gandak River. The dedicated assistance of the animal keepers and para-veterinary staff of the park is also sincerely appreciated.

We thank the past and present Field Directors of Valmiki Tiger Reserve; and the Divisional Forest Officers, Assistant Conservators of Forests, and Range Officers of Bettiah, Motihari, Gopalganj, Saran, and Vaishali Forest Divisions for their unconditional support on the ground for project implementation.

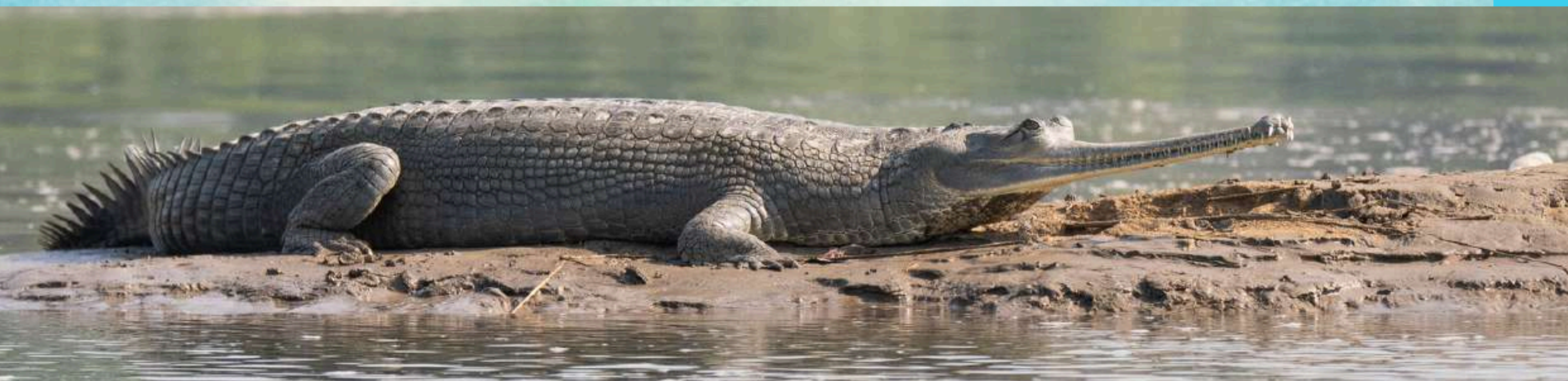
We sincerely acknowledge the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Government of Bihar, for allocating land in West Champaran district for the establishment of an ex-situ conservation facility for gharials and other aquatic reptiles.

We are equally grateful to the members of Panchayati Raj Institutions for extending their support to the project. Special thanks and appreciation to the local community members, farmers, and fishermen, who have been the true on-ground force—detecting and protecting gharial nests, and monitoring activities that could harm the river's biodiversity. Their vigilance and commitment have been critical to the project's achievements.

Finally, we extend heartfelt thanks to all interns and volunteers whose dedication and enthusiasm significantly contributed to the conservation of gharials in the Gandak River.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support received from the Government of Bihar, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens, and the Rainforest Trust.

Notes



प्रकृतिः रक्षति रक्षिता
Nature Protects if She is Protected

Government of Bihar
Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

An orange oak-leaf butterfly on a semal tree along the Gandak River

For further details about the project, please contact:

Chief Wildlife Warden
4th Floor, Aranya Bhawan
Shaheed Peer Ali Khan Marg
Patna - 800014
email: cwlwbihar@gmail.com

Species Recovery Division
Wildlife Trust of India
F-13, Sector-8, Noida - 201301
email: info@wti.org.in

A Film By DW Eco India

About the project

RAINFOREST TRUST

WTI
wti.org.in

LOS ANGELES ZOO