

Status of Crocodilians in Protected Areas of Rajasthan

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THE SEMI-ARID STATE OF Gujarat harbours two species of crocodilians; the Gangetic Gharial, (*Gavialis gangeticus*) and the mugger crocodile, (*Crocodylus palustris*). Gharial is found in the Chambal and other perennial tributaries of Ganges and the mugger crocodile is practically present in all kinds of fresh water areas in the state, although in very small numbers. Being an arid state, the state is endowed with numerous man-made lakes which support the mugger crocodile. However, as is the case in most of its distribution zone, the crocodilians were a persecuted lot till the adoption of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, when all the three species of Indian Crocodilian were placed in Schedule I of the Act. The present situation of crocodilians can be summarized as being safe in the Protected Areas of Rajasthan.

The State of Rajasthan was involved in the countrywide crocodile programme in the late 1970's which resulted in creation of the National Chambal Sanctuary, a significant portion of which remains within the Rajasthan state boundary. Reintroduction of Gharial and mugger crocodiles into

the wild in the Protected Areas of Rajasthan perhaps dates back to late 1960's. According to late Shri Kailash Sankbala (pers. comm.), captive breed mugger crocodiles have been introduced into the lakes of Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. Incidentally Jaipur Zoo of Rajasthan was one of the first zoo in the country to breed mugger crocodiles in captivity and in recent years have also been breeding Gharial in captivity.

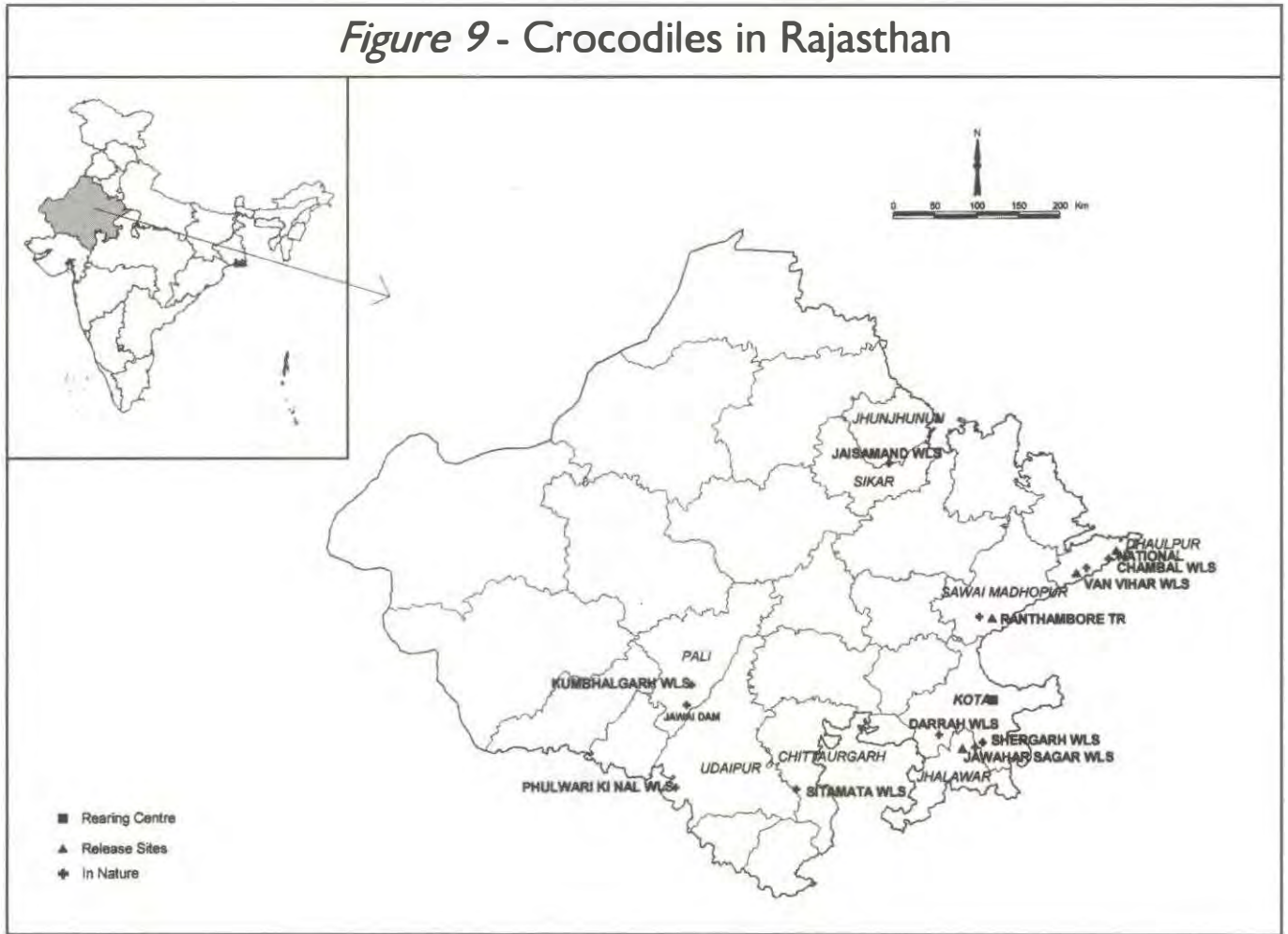
Early Crocodile Conservation Programmes in Rajasthan :

The state set up a small Gharial rearing station at Kota but had to stop that activity soon, once the state of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh set-up larger facilities to rear crocodilian for release into the wild in Chambal river. Thereafter, the state has more or less resorted to protection of crocodilians in the wild and reintroducing zoo-bred stocks into the wild.

The Future

With mugger breeding in all zoological parks in the state and some gharial population in the wild, there is a need to work out a long term strategy for crocodilians. Indian crocodilians have been a

Figure 9 - Crocodiles in Rajasthan



sought after wild animal by wildlife tourists. Some of the Protected Areas in Rajasthan will benefit through eco-tourism involving crocodilian species – particularly

Chambal, Ranthambhore and Jawai Reservoir closed area. This will also ensure proper monitoring of crocodile populations in the state.

Crocodilians in protected areas of Rajasthan		
<i>Protected Area</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Species</i>
Ranthambhore National Park	Sawai Madhopur	Mugger N&R (180-200)
Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary	Udaipur	Mugger N (<10)
Phulwari ke Nal Wildlife Sanctuary	Udaipur	Mugger N (<10)
Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary	Chittorgarh, Udaipur	Mugger (>50)
National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary	Kota, Sawai Madhopur, Bundi Dholpur, Karauli	Mugger and gharial N&R (>100) (<1200)
Danrah Wildlife Sanctuary	Kota, Jhalawar	Mugger N (<10)
Jawahar Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary	Bundi, Kota, Chittorgarh	Mugger and gharial N&R (<20)
Shergarh Wildlife Sanctuary	Baran	Mugger N (>50)
Jaisamand Wildlife Sanctuary	Udaipur	Mugger N (<10)
Jawai Reservoir	Pali	Mugger N&R (>20)
Van Vihar Wildlife Sanctuary	Dholpur	Mugger N&R (>10)

N = Natural population

R = Released population