

## National Chambal Sanctuary

The National Chambal Sanctuary, also known as National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary, was founded over the Chambal River in **1979** under the crocodile conservation project to protect Indian Gharials as a **riverine sanctuary**. In India, National Chambal Sanctuary is lying in three states of **Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan**.

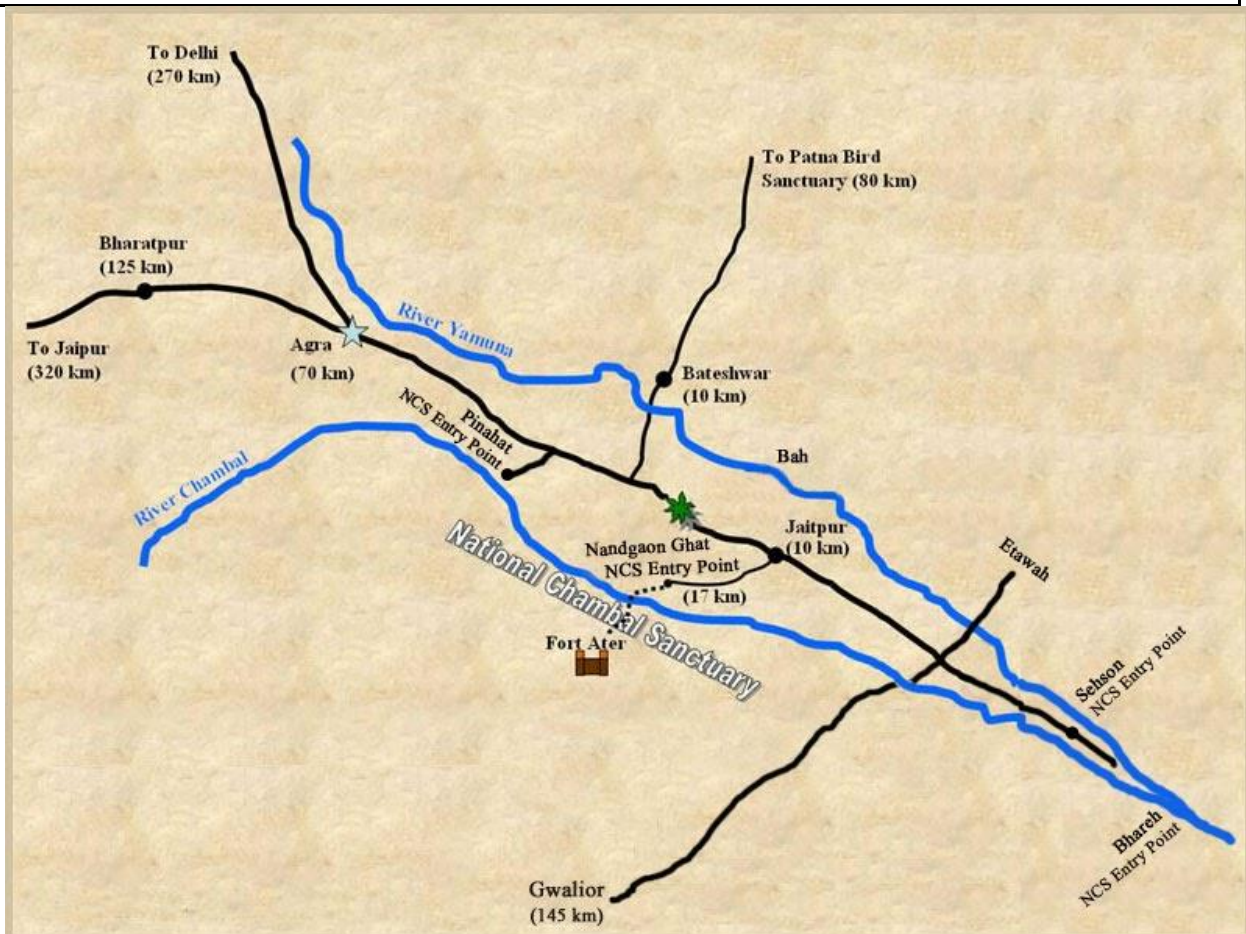
### Facts about National Chambal Sanctuary

- National Chambal Sanctuary (NCS) is called a tri-state sanctuary due to its diverse area in three states.
- It emerges from the Vindhya hill range of Madhya Pradesh, flows in Rajasthan and merges in the Yamuna River, where five rivers meet called Pachanada in Uttar Pradesh.
- A 600 km stretch of the Chambal River, between Jawahar Sagar Dam (Rajasthan) and Panchnada (Uttar Pradesh), has been declared as the National Chambal Sanctuary primarily for the conservation of gharial and associated aquatic fauna.
- The Sanctuary is managed by the Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh Forest Departments.
- The Chambal river is one of the pollution-free rivers of India, which provides a perfect habitat for the Gangetic Gharials and the Gangetic Dolphins and other aquatic animals, land animals and birds.
- This is perhaps the only wetland sanctuary in India for the conservation and management of crocodiles.
- Unpolluted and deep Chambal water, sandy islets and banks of River Chambal make it a perfect place for basking and nesting.
- The National Chambal Sanctuary is listed as an important bird area (IBA) and is a **proposed Ramsar site**.
- Apart from the gharial and smooth-coated otter, the fauna of the Sanctuary includes the marsh crocodile or mugger, seven species of freshwater turtles, Ganges river dolphin, and 78 species of wetland birds.

#### Gharial

- The gharial is endemic to the Indian subcontinent, occurring in the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and the Mahanadi River systems.

- It is believed that the gharial is now extinct from Myanmar, Bhutan and Pakistan.
- In Bangladesh, fewer than 20 individuals may be present.
- The gharial, once widespread, is now listed as 'Critically Endangered' in the IUCN Red List.
- As much as 96 to 98% of its population has declined in the last 60 years.
- The Chambal River holds the largest breeding subpopulation of gharial, with an estimated 48% of its total adult population.
- Chambal supports the largest population of Gharials in the wild.



Source - National Chambal Sanctuary Website

## Significance of National Chambal Sanctuary

- National Chambal sanctuary supports the largest population of Gangetic Gharials in India, and it is also the last known surviving habitat of Gangetic River Dolphin.
- Chambal is one of the cleanest rivers in India.

- National Chambal Sanctuary is home to eight species of turtles, some of them are endangered.
- National Chambal Sanctuary is one of the finest ecotourism and wildlife tourism destinations.
- India holds the only known remaining breeding grounds for **Indian Skimmer**, and National Chambal Sanctuary (NCS) is one among the very few locations in the country that hosts significant breeding populations of Indian Skimmer.

## Climate

- The temperature of the area ranges from 2 °C to 46 °C.
- The annual precipitation largely depends on the southwestern monsoon, which lasts from the third week of June until late September, with 500–600 mm of rainfall.

## Vegetation

- The area lies within the semi-arid zone of north-western India at the border of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and the Uttar Pradesh States, and the vegetation consists of the ravine, thorn forest.
- Evergreen riparian vegetation is completely absent, with only sparse ground cover along the severely eroded river banks and adjacent ravine lands.

## Tourism

There are different types of Tourism and allied activities which are carried out at the National Chambal Sanctuary spanning the three states. These activities include:

- River Safari
- Nature Walks
- Village Walks
- Jeep Safari
- Camel Safari
- Horse Safari
- Bateshwar Temple visit
- Ater fort visit
- Bird watching etc.,

## Threats faced by National Chambal Sanctuary

- State conflicts over sharing of water for different purposes like irrigation, hydel power projects, drinking water and so on.
- Lack of trained, skilled and adequate human resources in the National Chambal sanctuary results in harmful and illegal consequences on its biodiversity.
- Impact of fisheries in Chambal River on Gharials.
- Increased riverbank agriculture is very dangerous for the Gharials, Dolphins and other aquatic animals.
- Poaching and illegal hunting of Gharials for different purposes is one of the major threats to the survival of the Gharials.
- Water contamination from river Yamuna into river Chambal.
- Cattle grazing along the bank of river Chambal, a threat to the natural habitat of the Gharials which results in the destruction of the nesting places of the Gharials.

## Conservation Measures

National Chambal Sanctuary is one of the rare protected areas where good levels of conservation measures were successfully taken up and implemented. Some of them are as follows:

- The gharial rehabilitation project was started in the year 1979 when all-time low gharials were recorded.
- Deori has been designated as Gharial Rehabilitation Centre (DGRC) where artificial hatching and rearing of gharials was carried out.
- An additional boon for NCS is simultaneous conservation of one of the rarest and highly endangered aquatic mammals i.e. freshwater river dolphin (Gangetic Dolphin) during the implementation of the gharial project.
- The management criteria in the NCS are cessation of commercial fishing, anti-poaching measures, extending protection to habitat and rehabilitation of Gharial under 'grow and release program' and monitoring of the population of fauna and research.