

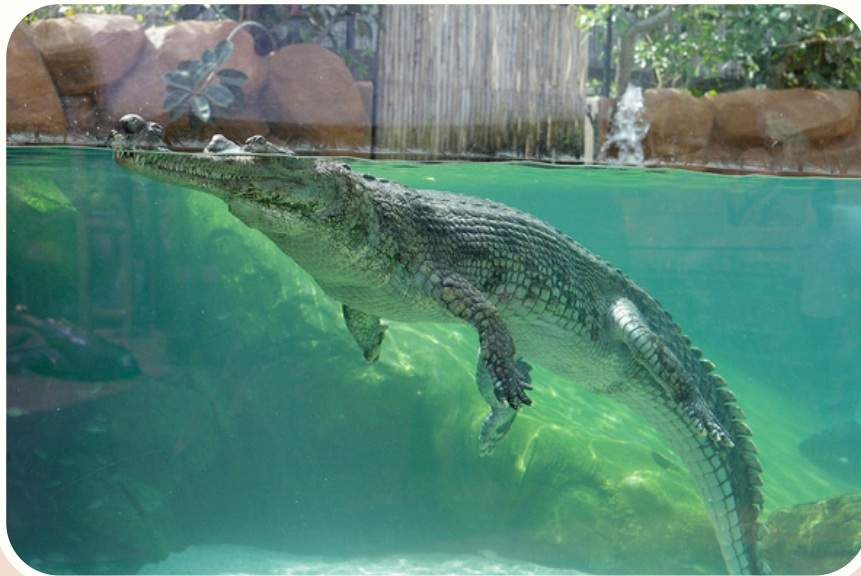
Animals We Love:

INDIAN GHARIALS

Recommended for primary school children

Let's learn more about Indian gharials:

- The Indian gharial is a crocodylian. This large reptile can grow to a length of 6 metres.
- Males and females look very different. Mature males have a bulbous growth on the tip of their snout. The Indian gharial gets its name from this bulbous growth which resembles an earthenware pot or 'ghara' in Hindi.
- Males use their 'ghara' to make sounds or blow bubbles, probably to attract females during the breeding season.
- The Indian gharial feeds mainly on fish, moving its long narrow snout side to side to snap prey with its sharp teeth. It uses sensory cells in its snout to detect vibrations made by prey.
- In the wild, Indian gharials are threatened by overhunting and egg collection. They also die from being trapped in fishing nets. Sand mining is also threatening their survival as they need sand banks to bask and to nest.



Use the See-Think-Wonder Thinking Routine* to start a conversation with your child

*Adapted from Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education

SEE

- Visit the [Zoo's webpage on estuarine crocodiles](#). What are the similarities and differences between the Indian gharial and the estuarine crocodile?
- If you could touch the Indian gharial, how do you think it might feel like? Think of five items with a texture similar to that of the Indian gharial.

THINK

- How does the thin narrow snout of the Indian gharial help it hunt underwater?
- What do you think might be a disadvantage for the Indian gharial to have such a long snout?

WONDER

- I wonder what sounds baby gharials make. Google it.

Activity Time!

Gharial Tales

- Invite your family members to create a story about an Indian gharial. Each member takes turns to contribute a sentence. Add other characters and sound effects!
- You may wish to illustrate your story or video record your story-telling session using a handphone.



Long, Narrow Snout

- Indian gharials move their snout side to side to snag fish. Their snout is shaped to hunt. Try this experiment to discover more.
- Move a long and narrow object (e.g., a chopstick) side to side in a basin of water. Do the same with a broader and chunkier object (e.g., a slipper). Which object feels easier to move in water?

Note: Did you notice that the long narrow object is easier to move in water? This is because it has a smaller surface area and therefore offers less resistance. The long and narrow snout of the Indian gharial is shaped to cut through water and snag prey.