

## Project Update: July 2014

Reporting period: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

### 1. Study of population status

A survey was carried out in the Narayani River of Chitwan National Park from the last week of February 2014 to 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March 2014 to assess the population of gharial crocodiles. The entire riverine stretch was intensively searched with the help of two dugout boats. Altogether 55 gharials including one breeding male were counted. The largest population group was found in Khoriya Muhan downstream to the Rapti-Narayani confluence. A total number of 28 gharials were recorded in this area. Similarly, a second group was found in Velaunji recording a total number of 12 gharials. A small group of four gharials was also found in Laidaghat area.



A female gharial basking on the sandy bank

### 2. Basking activity:

During the survey period, the basking behaviour of the gharial crocodiles in relation to the water depth was also investigated. The gharials preferred basking on the sandy banks along the shallow branch and main channel with the water depth ranging from 1 m to 5 m. Few gharials were also seen basking on the rocky bank.

### 3. Hatching success:

The hatching activities of the gharial crocodiles were studied in artificially incubated state in Gharial Project Camp from 8<sup>th</sup> June 2014 – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2014. The eggs from seven nests were collected from different locations of the Narayani River including

Bhosarghat, Khoriya Muhan, Laidaghat and Velaunji and kept in artificial pits within the camp area for incubation. Altogether 42 hatchlings were hatched from the eggs of these pits.



Gharial eggs being collected from the natural nest



A hatchling emerging out of the egg