

Project Update: January 2019

Upon completion of our field work in June 2018, we identified vegetation to be a key threat to gharial nesting success. Natural vegetation, especially rapidly growing grass species, has recently taken over a majority of gharial nesting sites affecting both the physical accessibility and substrate of the nesting sites. Upon our recommendation, the concerned forest department has undertaken a management intervention by manually clearing the vegetated nesting sites using a standard weed controlling protocol. The intervention has been initiated under our supervision and shall be completed before the nesting begins. It is a great development for the breeding population in Katarniaghat as we have observed 40% decrease in nest numbers and over 80% decrease in optimal nesting area in last three breeding seasons.

Secondly, we have initiated the social survey to evaluate the stakeholder's perception in crocodilian conservation and human-crocodile conflicts. We were able to interview four victims of such conflicts and plan to complete the surveys by end of March 2019. Our next step is monitoring of mating groups and determining the size of breeding population, followed by monitoring of nesting.



A male gharial basking



Interviewing a crocodile attack victim



A male gharial captured basking using a Camera trap