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Q67

If you want to see gharials in their natural habitat, which one of the following is the best place to visit? (a) Bhitarkanika Mangroves (b) Chambal River (c) Pulicat Lake (d) Deepor Beel
Official key: B.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2017 · General Studies · 2 marks · Environment and Ecology

Environment, ecology, climate, biodiversity - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a)**

Bhitarkanika mangroves in Odisha are famous for saltwater crocodiles and Olive Ridley nesting nearby, not as the wild stronghold of the **gharial**. This option is not the key.

(b) Official key

The **National Chambal Sanctuary** on the Chambal River (Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh-Uttar Pradesh) is the best-known natural habitat remaining for the **gharial**. Wild breeding populations are monitored there. That is why (b) is the official key.

(c)

Pulicat Lake is a brackish lagoon for waterbirds and fisheries, not a **gharial** river. This option is therefore wrong.

(d)

Deepor Beel is a Ramsar wetland near Guwahati, important for birds, not a **gharial** haunt. This option is not the key.

Summary

Official key is (b) Chambal River. *Gavialis gangeticus* is a fish-eating river crocodilian of clean, deep rivers. The Chambal sanctuary is India's principal wild **gharial** landscape. Bhitarkanika holds saltwater crocodiles; Pulicat and Deepor Beel are lagoon/wetland bird sites. Only the Chambal matches the question.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*)

Critically endangered; ghara boss on adult male snout

National Chambal Sanctuary

Tri-state protected river stretch for gharial, dolphin, otter

Other gharial rivers

Girwa (Katarniaghat), Gandak, Ghaghara stretches in smaller numbers

Mugger

Crocodylus palustris; broader habitat than gharial

Saltwater crocodile

Crocodylus porosus; Bhitarkanika and Andamans

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