



# Simlipal National Park: Crocodile Recovery

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**News Context:** The January 2026 census in Odisha's Simlipal National Park recorded 84 mugger crocodiles, reversing a two-year decline.

- **Key Findings:** The West Deo River remains the primary habitat, hosting 60 of the 84 crocodiles. The count rose from 81 in 2025.
- **Conservation Model:** The recovery is attributed to the Ramatirtha breeding centre, which releases captive-bred hatchlings into the park's major rivers (Budhabalanga, Khairi, and Salandi) to supplement the wild population.
- **Habitat Quality:** As an "apex predator" of freshwater systems, the rising crocodile numbers indicate the health of Simlipal's riverine ecosystem and the success of anti-poaching measures.