

Crocodile Blues

The Gharial is one of the world's most magnificent reptiles. This 20 foot 2000lb fish-eater crocodile evolved with the dinosaurs, and its 150 million year reign in rivers throughout the world, from Spain to Japan, has made it one of the most successful species the planet has ever seen.

Today its future hangs by a thread. In September 2007 the Gharial was officially recognized as 'critically Endangered' by the IUCN (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/search/details.php/8966/summ>), meaning it was now one small step away from extinction in the wild. Its numbers had decreased to around 200 breeding adults in only a handful of rivers in India and Nepal.

Then in December 2007 on the Chambal River Sanctuary in northern India Gharial began dying in mysterious circumstances. The next five months saw the death of over 100 animals, or nearly 10% of the entire wild population. And no-one had any idea of the cause.

Since the 1970s the future of the Gharial has been championed by herpetologist and conservationist Romulus Whitaker. Rom is one of the world's foremost reptile experts, and from his base at the Madras Crocodile Bank (<http://www.madrascrocodilebank.org/>) has done as much as anyone on the planet to save India's threatened reptiles. And he has been a key player in responding to this crisis.

This film follows Rom's progress throughout 2008. Can his team solve the mystery of the calamitous die-off? How successful will his attempts be to secure the safety of the species with a pioneering captive-breeding programme? And will the Gharial in India's other major sanctuary cope with human pressures, habitat destruction and a disastrous monsoon flood?

With these events unfolding over **the last twelve months** *Crocodile Blues* is an urgent account of one man's struggle to save one of the planet's most remarkable animals. With footage of behaviour that has never been seen before, and may never be seen again, *Crocodile Blues* is a wildlife documentary that matters.

Romulus Whitaker says ***'You thought tigers and rhinos are rare? There are still a few thousand of them around. The Gharial is down to less than 200 breeding adults in the wild and has the dubious distinction of being the largest critically endangered animal on the Indian subcontinent'***