

## Mugger Crocodile spotted in Kiliyur Lake, Tamil Nadu, India

The Mugger Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* also called Marsh Crocodile and Swamp Crocodile is a medium-sized crocodile and living member of the family Crocodylidae. It is restricted to the Indian subcontinent and the species can be found in freshwater habitats, such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs, hill streams, ponds and man-made tanks, and sometimes in coastal saltwater lagoons too (Choudhury & de Silva 2013).

The species is listed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972, 'Vulnerable' under the IUCN Red List (Choudhury & de Silva 2013), and under Appendix I of the CITES.

In India, there are many human-mugger interaction cases reported (Choudhury & de Silva 2013). In the last 75 years, there is a 30% population decline of Muggers, which is caused



**Mugger Crocodile spotted in Kiliyur Lake. © T. Siva.**



by habitat destruction, rampant fishing, egg predations by human and dogs, illegal poaching for skin and meat consumption medicinal use of Mugger parts are now marginal (Groombridge 1982; de Silva & Lenin 2010; Choudhury & de Silva 2013).

### Mugger Crocodile spotted in Kiliyur Lake

Kiliyur Lake (10.81346 N & 78.84825 E) is located in Kiliyur Village in Tiruvarambur Taluk of Tiruchirappalli District in Tamil Nadu. This lake receives water from Cauvery River via Vellar River. Kiliyur Lake is one of the bird diversity hotspots in Tiruchirappalli District. The surrounding area is fully surrounded by agricultural landscape and mostly cultivated for paddy. During bird watching on 31 January 2021 in Kiliyur Lake, we observed and recorded one Mugger (Muthalai - Tamil) basking on the central mound of the lake under the plant *Prosopis juliflora*.

The crocodile was photographed using Nikon D3300 with zoom lens 500mm and photos were analyzed and later identified using a field guide (Daniel 2002) as the Mugger.

We observed the species for more than thirty minutes and recorded the length of the crocodile as 4–5 feet. There can be many possible reasons for the crocodile's occurrence in this lake. In Tiruchirappalli District, crocodiles have been spotted in nearby Cauvery and Kollidam rivers. The Kiliyur Lake is connected to the Kallanai dam via Vellar River canal, so it may have probably come from the Kallanai.

The presence of the crocodile in this lake can become a suitable place to study its behavior, ecology, and biology.

### References

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