

REPTILES OF INDIA

Reptiles have originated some 300 millions years ago and are found in nearly all parts of World, except the very cold regions There are more than 6000 species in all. Of the 518 species of reptiles found in India, nearly 192 species of reptiles are endemic to India. All three living orders of reptiles have their representatives are the order Crocodilia containing the crocodiles and gharials with 3 species, order Testudines (turtles and tortoises) with 34 species and Order Squamata (lizards and snakes) with 202 species of lizards and 279 species of snakes. In India reptile rich areas are the Western Ghats, Eastern Himalayas Andaman & the Nicobar Islands and are generally endowed with many endemic species.



SOUTHERN REGIONAL CENTRE

Zoological Survey Of india
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GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION YEAR-2011

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HIGH LIGHTS

- Reptiles are mainly exploited for their Skin, flesh, and shell.
- Over population, urbanization and habitat destruction are the factors leads to exploit the reptiles population.
- Snakes are real friends of farmers because it control the rodent population.
- All the reptiles are protected under the Indian wildlife (protection) act 1972.
- Zoological Survey of India is conducting various surveys, scientific and conservation programme on Indian faunal resources to colleges, research institutions and student communities in India.

Crocodiles

Crocodiles are large lizard like reptiles which can live in water and on land. The body of crocodiles are covered with a tough hide like skin with bony plates. The adult crocodiles are dull in colour but the young are brightly colored with dark brown spots or bar on the back. They are strictly carnivorous and live in lakes, rivers and estuaries, it is an excellent swimmer. The eyes have a transparent third eyelid permitting limited under water vision. It lays oval hard shelled eggs which are buried in the soil or in the nest of soil and vegetation for incubation. Parental care is in the form of guarding the nest by the female. They can live up to 70 years.



Turtles and Tortoises

Turtles and Tortoises are easily recognized from all other animals by the characteristic bony shells. The shell has two parts the carapace above and plastron below which is joined on either side by bony bridge. Turtle can live in the water and land but tortoises can live only on the land. They have excellent eyesight, poor sense of hearing and do not have teeth but jaws are equipped with sharp, serrated edges. Its food habits vary some species being carnivores, some vegetarians and others are omnivorous. Turtles play an important role as scavengers in the ecosystem. They lay their eggs in the soil only. The lifespan of the turtle and tortoises is more than 100 years.

lizards

There are about 2800 species of lizards in the World of which 202 species are found in India. Lizards are generally distinguished from the snake by the presence of limbs. Resembles snakes but can be distinguished by their movable eyelids. All the lizards are ground dwelling as well as arboreal. Lizards are mainly insectivores even though a few are herbivores and some are carnivores. It lays eggs which are usually buried in the soil for incubation.

Snakes

Snakes are elongate, legless, carnivorous reptiles of the suborder Serpents that can be distinguished from legless lizards by their lack of eyelids and external ears Most species are non-venomous and those that have venom use it primarily to kill and subdue prey rather than for self-defense. Some possess venom potent enough to cause painful injury or death to humans. Non-venomous snakes either swallow prey alive or kill by constriction. Snakes are strictly carnivorous, eating small animals including lizards, other snakes, small mammals, birds, eggs, fish, and snails. Because snakes cannot bite or tear their food to pieces, they swallow whole prey. Snakes are found on every continent except Antarctica and on most islands.

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