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CROCODILE ADVENTURELAND AS A PLATFORM FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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Biodiversity is arguably among the most valuable assets of the natural environment, the interwoven system of life that maintains the ecosystems and supports the welfare of humans, along with the condition of the planet, as the one that will survive and prosper.

Crocodile Adventureland is the only sanctuary which creates awareness of the importance of biodiversity and informs visitors about some of the most interesting lizards in the world. This animal paradise is not just a wildlife park, but a living classroom whereby visitors of all ages will learn, feel and see the importance of crocodiles in their respective ecosystems. The primary focal point of the mission of the park is its vast variety of species of crocodiles, each of which is maintained and exhibited, demonstrating the ecological significance and conservation requirements.

The False Gharial (*Tomistoma schlegelii*) is one of the most unique species found in the

Crocodile Adventureland. The False Gharial is a rare and endangered native of the rivers and swamps of Southeast Asia, and it is seldom seen in the wild. Its long and narrow snout is adapted to fish, which is its chief food. False Gharials are very critical signatures of good freshwater ecology. Through the protection environment it offers to them,

the park makes people aware of threats such as destroying their habitat, pollution and illegal hunting. The observation of the given species makes the guests understand the role of even one specialized species in the maintenance of the ecosystem, emphasizing the significance of the freshwater biodiversity for future generations.



Figure 1: Preserving the wonders of nature for future generations by showcasing the world of gharials and emphasizing the importance of biodiversity conservation for the well-being of our planet and its future inhabitants.
(Source: Author's own collection)

Visitors of the park can also see the Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) which is one of the largest and most powerful reptiles. Crocodile Adventureland will have two different types of the species: the golden porosus with a golden colour (gold) and a blunt porosus with muted colour (sand). Both versions have within-species diversity, which provides visitors with the opportunity to see a variety of species in one species. Saltwater Crocodiles are apex predators, which therefore balance the population of different fish and other members of the ecosystem. Due to observation of these crocodiles, the visitors are made aware that to have balance in the ecosystem, it is important to conserve the major predators. Their conservation is a key focus of the park, and one that directs the importance of the relationship between apex predators and successful aquatic ecosystems and enhances the status of human influence on the wildlife.

The other interesting species is the New Guinea Crocodile (*Crocodylus novaeguineae*), a smaller and agile freshwater crocodile which is an agile one, and very adaptable. This species is indigenous to New Guinea and is known to have distinct hunting behaviours and techniques. At the park, the observer is able to see its eating habits and social life



Figure 2: (A) Young learners participating in an educational wildlife activity, eagerly observing and interacting with reptiles, while being guided by instructors in a natural setting; (B) An informative display about crocodiles, showcasing their hunting technique of drowning prey and their impressive night vision.
(Source: Author's own collection)

and learn about the variety of crocodile species. The New Guinea Crocodile serves as a reminder of the fact that biodiversity is not merely the large, imposing animals, but smaller, less noticeable species which are vital to the health of the ecosystem. Their existence supports the message that every species, even the small ones, is valuable as far as the environment is concerned.

By displaying these species, some of them being very rare like the False Gharial or the exotic Saltwater Crocodile and the agile New Guinea Crocodile, Crocodile Adventureland offers one physical manifestation of biodiversity. The park has educational programs that educate about the threats which crocodiles are experiencing due to loss of habitats, deforestation and illegal trade, but also the ecological functions of crocodiles. Tourists go on with a new realization that it is

essential to preserve these species today so that those who will come later will get to see and learn more about them. The park makes one honorable, conscious, responsible towards conservation and demonstrates that even the feared or misunderstood reptiles are part of the balanced ecosystem.

Crocodile Adventureland provides an example of how biodiversity education takes place in the world with environmental issues. By placing an emphasis on the different species of crocodiles, the park conserves these reptiles and instructs the tourists on the need to live in harmony, evolutionary variety, and ecological preservation.

The lessons learned here help secure the continuity of life's richness and inspire awe for Earth's biodiversity, underscoring the urgent need to protect it today for the benefit of future generations.