

# Positive steps toward wild Siamese crocodile conservation

September 3 2014, by Jeremy Holden

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Building on an international partnership, the Cambodian Crocodile Conservation Project (CCCP) recently invited Nikhil Whitaker, curator at the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust (MCBT) in India to help train keepers at Fauna & Flora International's Siamese crocodile captive breeding programme facility.

In recent years, CCCP has focused not only on protecting wild Siamese crocodile populations but also on augmenting these populations and establishing new ones in areas where crocodiles formerly occurred using captive bred individuals.

The MCBT has a highly successful Siamese crocodile captive breeding programme and also maintains populations of 18 other species of crocodilian. They bring not only technical expertise in crocodile husbandry and breeding care, but also experience from a developing world perspective.

"Our captive breeding programme for wild release is an essential part of the CCCP's long-term goal of conserving Siamese crocodiles in the wild," said Dr Jackson Frechette, Flagship Species Manager for Fauna & Flora International (FFI) in Cambodia.

"We invited the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust to help because – through Nikhil – they bring decades of captive breeding experience to guide our efforts in what is becoming an increasingly important part of our work to both protect and re-establish viable populations of Siamese crocodiles in Cambodia."

"In 2012, our team members visited Madras to see their facilities and receive training on crocodile husbandry," he continued. "Now Nikhil is visiting us as a follow-up to provide recommendations on how we can improve the care we give our crocodiles. In order to reach our goal of having a highly productive [captive breeding](#) programme it is essential that our keepers are of an international standard. As FFI expands its breeding programme, we will continue to work with MCBT and other international experts to make sure this is achieved."



Nikhil Whitaker with Sam Han CCCP Manager and head keeper Rath at FFI's captive breeding facility. Credit: Jeremy Holden/FFI

Since 2011, the CCCP has released 55 crocodiles back into the wild; 35 of them were [crocodiles](#) we received as donations or were confiscated, while 20 were head-started juveniles (eggs removed from the wild and reared for two to three years) that were recently released back into the wild.

Provided by Fauna & Flora International

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