



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SIAMESE CROCODILES RELEASED INTO SREPOK RIVER TO SUPPORT SPECIES RECOVERY in Cambodia

Government, WWF-Cambodia and partners strengthen efforts to recover one of the world's rarest crocodile species.

Monduliri Province, Cambodia — 22 May 2026, WWF-Cambodia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment (MoE), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Monduliri Provincial Administration, Fauna & Flora, local authorities, and community partners, today release 10 purebred Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*) into the Srepok River within the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary, following consultations and consents from different levels of stakeholders, including Indigenous People and Local Community (IPLCs). The release marks an important milestone in Cambodia's efforts to recover one of the world's most endangered crocodylian species and strengthen freshwater ecosystem conservation in Eastern Plains landscape (EPL).

The Eastern Plains Landscape is one of Southeast Asia's most important biodiversity conservation areas and supports globally significant populations of endangered wildlife and freshwater biodiversity.

The initiative aims to strengthen the small and isolated Siamese crocodile population in the Srepok River system and support long-term population recovery through science-based conservation interventions. Classified as *Critically Endangered* on the IUCN Red List, fewer than 1,000 Siamese crocodiles are estimated to remain in the wild globally. Cambodia is considered a global stronghold for the species, hosting one of the largest remaining populations and playing a pivotal role in ensuring its survival.

The initiative follows years of scientific research on species population, habitat assessments, conservation planning, and community engagement. In 2021, WWF-Cambodia researchers documented the first photographic evidence of naturally hatched Siamese crocodiles in the Srepok River system, confirming successful breeding in the wild and highlighting the river's importance as a priority site for species recovery.

H.E. Dr. Eang Sophalleth said: “This release demonstrates Cambodia continued commitment to protecting our country’s unique biodiversity and restoring endangered wildlife populations. This achievement highlights the strength of collaboration between government institutions, conservation organizations, and local communities to working together to secure the future of the Siamese crocodile and healthy freshwater ecosystems.”

WWF-Cambodia Country Director **Dipankar Chyau Patnaik** said: “This release reflects WWF-Cambodia’s long-term commitment to restoring the Siamese crocodile as a flagship species of Cambodia’s freshwater ecosystems. By having more breeding pair to the Srepok River, we are not only helping secure its survival but also strengthening ecosystem health and resilience for biodiversity and communities that depend on these nature resources.”

Fauna & Flora Country Director **Horm Chandet** added: “Fauna & Flora is delighted to join this release activity with WWF-Cambodia, building on our expertise and experience in this species conservation. This release reflects years of scientific collaboration and conservation investment to recover one of Southeast Asia’s most threatened reptiles. Cambodia has become a regional leader in Siamese crocodile conservation, and the Srepok River programme represents an important step toward rebuilding resilient wild populations.”

The crocodiles released into the Srepok River were sourced from Forestry Administration and Fauna & Flora’s genetically purebred Siamese Crocodile breeding facility and underwent strict genetic and health checks before release. All released crocodiles were implanted with acoustic tags for the post-release monitoring. The programme follows international conservation translocation guidelines, including post-release monitoring using acoustic telemetry technology to better understand crocodile movement, survival, and adaptation in the wild and inform our future release.

The Srepok crocodile population restoration initiative is supported through strengthened river patrols, habitat protection, community engagement, awareness raising, and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) to reduce threats such as illegal fishing, and habitat degradation.

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