



‘Swindon croc’ returns to Museum & Art Swindon

Swindon’s famous ‘croc’ has now returned to its home at Museum & Art Swindon (MAS) in a new exhibition.

The gharial, which has been in Swindon Borough Council’s possession since 1931, was unveiled by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jim Robbins, Deputy Mayor of Swindon, Councillor Neil Hopkins, and South Swindon MP Heidi Alexander, at a special event at the Civic Offices today (23 May).

A member of the crocodilian order of reptiles, and originally found in the Indian subcontinent, the gharial has been displayed in a number of exhibitions throughout the years, but required much-needed restoration work before making its debut at Museum & Art Swindon.

While being restored, the museum team, working alongside a group of young people, developed a new display which now sits as part of the MAS introductory area, within the revamped ‘Origins’ gallery.

As part of the work to create the new exhibition, the team looked into the history of the gharial, the moral, ethical and legal considerations of protecting a critically-endangered species, where it can currently be found in the wild and what it means to the people of Swindon.

The new exhibition also highlights creatures in Wiltshire that are on the critical list such as the West European Hedgehog and the Lapwing bird.

Councillor Jim Robbins, Leader of Swindon Borough Council, said: “The gharial, or ‘Swindon Croc’ as it’s fondly known, is one of the most famous pieces in Swindon’s collection and was the figurehead of the Save the Croc campaign when the Museum & Art Gallery closed at Apsley House in Old Town.

“I’ve been a real advocate for the gharial’s return, so I am incredibly pleased it’s now in its rightful place and I’d like to thank council officers for finally making it happen. The gharial is more than just a stuffed reptile in a museum and we want to make sure its long and complex history, which intertwines with Britain’s past and the country’s place in the world, is explored in the right way.

“The croc’s back, why not come and see it for yourself. It’s perfect that it’s returned just ahead of a school holiday, so I hope lots of Swindon families will be visiting to see the famous Croc. It’s even got its own merch!”

To celebrate the arrival of the gharial to Museum & Art Swindon, special merchandise is available including a plush toy which can also be purchased through the museum's website.

Those wishing to see the gharial can visit MAS Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10.30am to 4.30pm. The museum is free to enter. [More on the Museum & Art Swindon website.](#)

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Notes to Editors:

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Images:

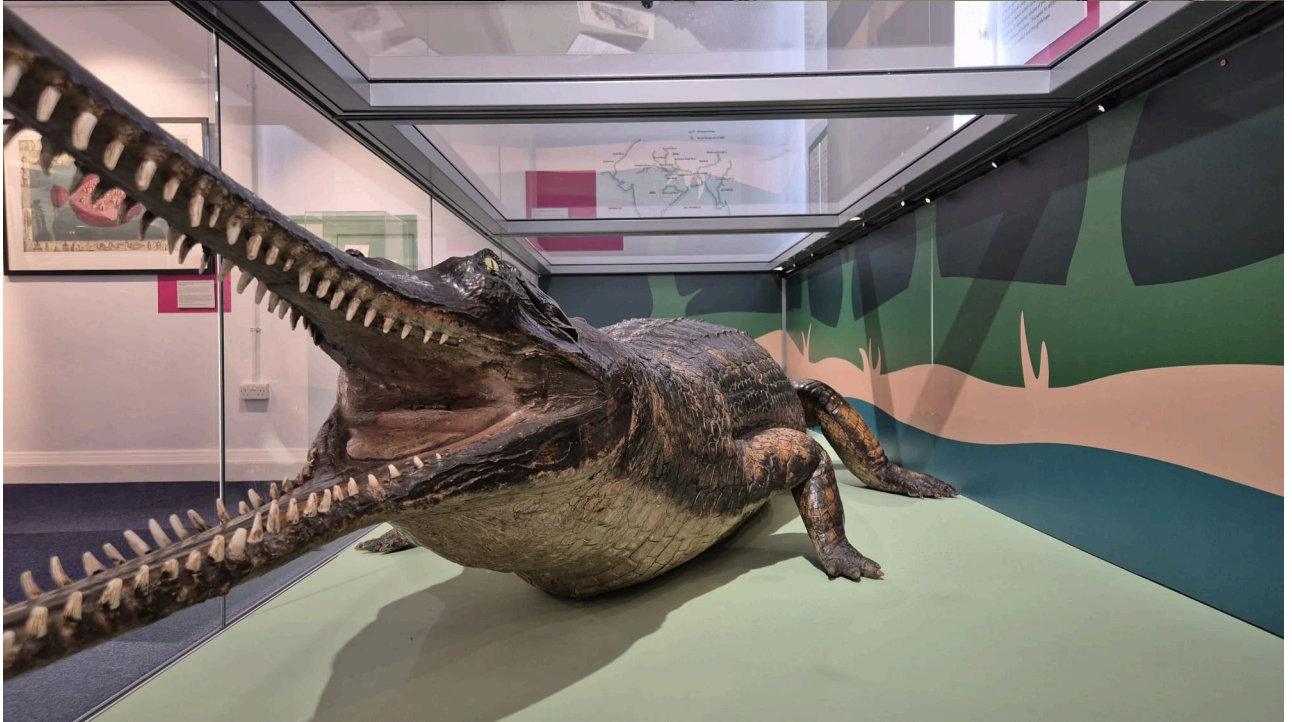
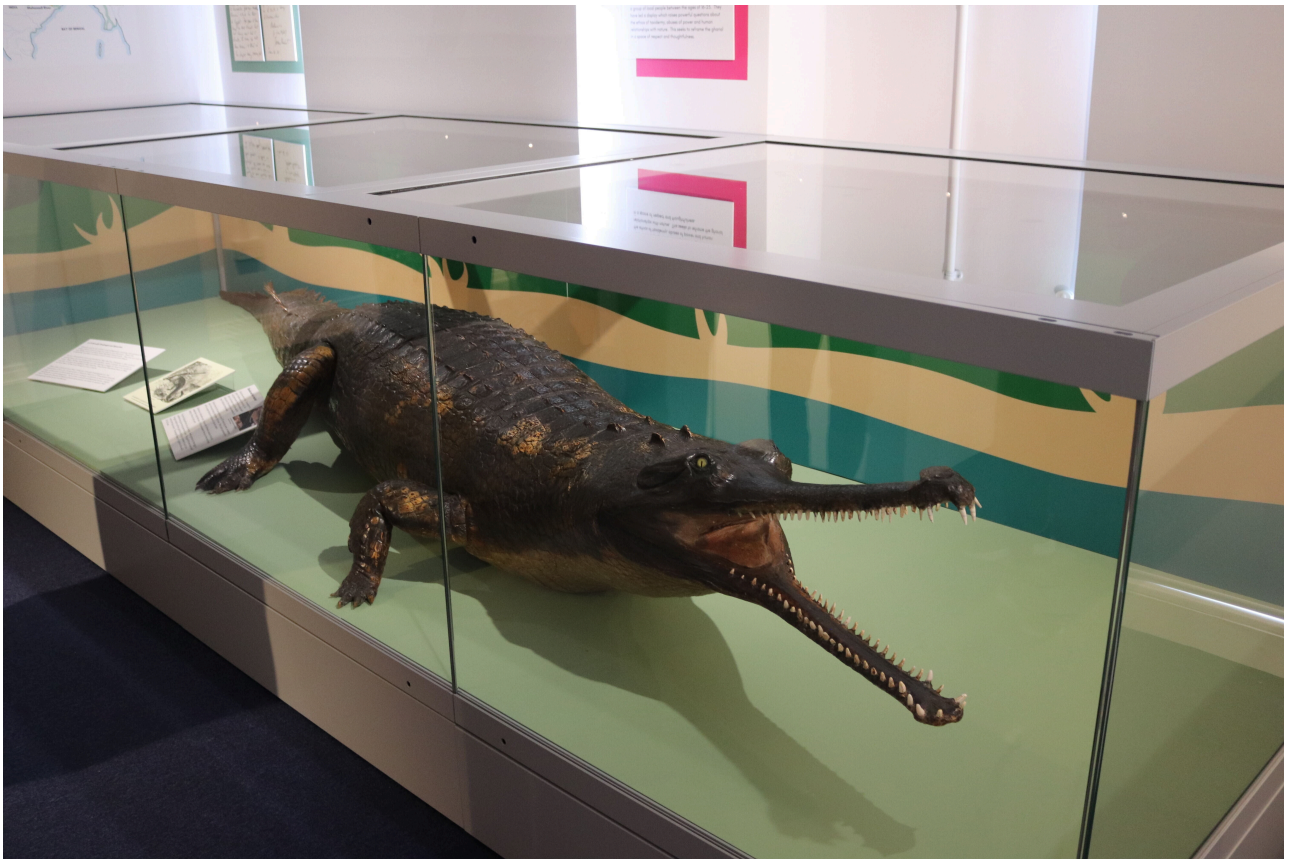
Picture 1: The unveiling of the gharial (Left to right: Heidi Alexander (South Swindon MP), Andrew Cross (Friends of Museum & Art Swindon Chair), Frances Yeo (Museums Manager at Swindon Borough Council), Councillor Jim Robbins (Leader of Swindon Borough Council), Councillor Neil Hopkins (Deputy Mayor of Swindon)

Picture 2 and 3: The gharial in its case

Picture 4: A West European Hedgehog, part of the new exhibition

[Link to unveiling video](#) (expires after three days).







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