

Rare crocodile eggs hatched at Cambodian conservation center

By **Sopheng Cheang**
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — Nine eggs of an endangered crocodile species found in the wild in June and taken to a conservation center in southern Cambodia have hatched, according to conservationists.

The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Cambodia's Fisheries Administration said the eggs of nine Siamese crocodiles hatched at the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center after being retrieved from the wild to protect them from poachers and predators.

WCS says the crocodile, with an estimated global population of around 410, is found only in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, with the greatest number in Cambodia. The species is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature because its numbers are rapidly shrinking.

The June discovery of the eggs was the first Siamese crocodile nest recorded in six years of research and protection in Koh Kong's Sre Ambel area.

The conservation center was established by the two organizations to safeguard



endangered reptiles such as Siamese crocodiles and Royal turtles.

"We will take care of these hatchlings until they are able to survive in nature on their own," the groups' joint announcement quoted Som Sitha, WCS's technical adviser for the Sre Ambel Conservation Project, as saying. "We will then release some to the wild, and others will be kept for breeding."

His colleague, Tun Sarorn, caretaker of Royal turtles and Siamese crocodiles at the center, expressed her excitement over the hatchlings.

"I am so excited to see these hatchlings. It is the first time I have taken care of them since arriving at the center," she was quoted as saying. "Before seeing them, I was surprised to hear their voices from inside the eggs. It was amazing, and I felt

FORTUITOUS FIND. Siamese baby crocodiles swim in a bin at the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center in Koh Kong, Cambodia. The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society and Cambodia's Fisheries Administration said the eggs of nine Siamese crocodiles hatched at the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center, after being retrieved from the wild to protect them from poachers and predators. (Wildlife Conservation Society and Fisheries Administration via AP)

so happy because I realized they are coming out. I will feed them all ... with small fish and frogs."

A different conservation group, WWF-Cambodia, separately announced encouraging news about another endangered species, the Irrawaddy dolphin, or Mekong dolphin, which has a worldwide population of about 7,000, 90 percent of that in Bangladesh. In Cambodia and Laos, there are an estimated 80 adults in the Mekong River. WWF-Cambodia announced that from January through mid-August, they recorded two dolphin deaths and eight births, an improvement over the same period last year when there were four deaths and four births.

"More than ever, there is hope to believe it is possible to reverse the trend of the Mekong dolphin decline," the group said in a statement.



LIFESAVING SKILL. Bangladeshi children attend a swim-training session as others watch, at a pond in the Shishu Polli Plus area in Sree-pur village, near Dhaka, Bangladesh. Drowning is a major cause of death among youngsters in Bangladesh, claiming up to 18,000 children under the age of 18 every year, and 43 percent of deaths among children under age five, according to a 2011 government survey. A British charity has partnered with a Bangladeshi research group to offer swim lessons in the central Bangladeshi farming village for children from poor, rural families. (AP Photo/A.M. Ahad)

Swim class aims to stop major cause of death in Bangladesh

By **Julhas Alam**
The Associated Press

SREEPUR, Bangladesh — Children once afraid of the water are learning how to swim in a program aimed at reducing drownings in Bangladesh.

The delta nation is crisscrossed by hundreds of canals, streams, and rivers, and drowning is a major cause of death among youngsters. A 2011 government survey found that up to 18,000 children drown every year — accounting for 43 percent of deaths among children under five years old.

Teaching basic swimming skills is seen as a way to prevent more deaths.

A woman who lost two sons says she is overwhelmed with regret for not ensuring her children could swim. A weeping Samela Begum implored other mothers to teach their children to swim, "otherwise your laps will become empty like mine."

Changing tastes brew bitter times for Japan's beer makers

By **Yuri Kageyama**
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — From beer gardens on the rooftops of department stores to fireworks extravaganzas to quiet, wood-paneled craft breweries, Japanese seem to quaff an awful lot of beer in the summer.

But beer consumption has been tanking for five years straight in Japan, as the younger generation shies away from the obligatory after-work drinking that was a trademark of the dark-suited heroes of Japan Inc.

Japan's annual per capita beer consumption fell about seven percent between 2010 to 2015, according to a study by major beer maker Kirin.

The future outlook is for more of the same. It's such an obvious trend that there's a Japanese phrase to describe it, *beerooh banareh*, or "leaving beer," a gradual decline that hit after beer drinking peaked in about the mid-1990s.

Younger Japanese tend to be more independent minded than their baby-boom generation parents or their grandparents, who saw going out for beers with their office bosses and co-workers as a call of duty.

Brews also are losing out in Japan to a wide variety of other liquors, from wines to *kanchuhai* fruity cocktails, whiskies, and cheaper beer-like drinks, and of course, saké.

Naturally, all this worries Haruhiko Matsuba, marketing manager for Asahi Breweries, the industry leader in Japan.

"The custom is getting lost," said Matsuba, who says he enjoys a beer or two a day. "Beer can offer joy, happiness, and smiles, and so everyone should try beer again."

Asahi, founded in the late 1800s, is an institution in Tokyo, where its huge golden suds sign shines on the banks of the Sumida River. The annual Sumida River summer fireworks it sponsors each July work like one big huge ad for its beer by the river. This year the city's governor, Yuriko Koike, donned a summer kimono for televised *kanpais* — traditional toasts.

In its effort to grab attention and help reverse the decline in beer consumption, especially among the younger generation, the iconic Japanese brand has turned to Hollywood. It tapped actor Johnny Depp to help sell a limited-edition version of its 30-year-old hit Super Dry — the brew that helped catapult it to No. 1 in the Japanese beer industry in 1998. The company's latest ad campaign



BEEROOH BANAREH. Takuya Iwata, left, and Mai Kamii, right, drink beer at Spring Valley Brewery in Tokyo. Japan's beer consumption has been tanking as younger "salaryman" types shun old-style, after-work drinking and craft breweries woo those who still love their suds. But beer makers are fighting back, striking deals with well-known foreign brands and sprucing up their advertising to reach younger drinkers. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

features Depp riffing on an electric guitar on a rooftop before popping a cold one.

"He is an extraordinary character," Matsuba told The Associated Press. "It's about the unexpected factor of Hollywood."

To expand its already formidable global reach, Asahi has signed agreements with overseas beer brands, such as Italy's Peroni, the Dutch Grolsch, and Pilsner Urquell of Czechoslovakia.

Other Japanese breweries also are expanding. Asahi's rival, Sapporo Holdings, which has been the No. 1 Japanese beer maker in the U.S. for three decades, has

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