



State of India's Bird 2020

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Why in News

Recently, the **State of India's Bird 2020 was released** at the **13th Conference of Parties of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals** which is taking place in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- The **first-of-its-kind analysis** was carried out by **ten research and conservation organisations across India**.
- It used a massive database of over **10 million observations** uploaded by 15,000 birdwatchers on the **online platform (e-Bird)** and '**citizen science data**' to assess the distribution and trends of **common Indian birds**.

Key Points

- **Declining trend:**

The groups that show the **greatest decline** are raptors, migratory shorebirds, and habitat specialists, including White-rumped Vulture, Richard's Pipit, Indian Vulture, Large-billed Leaf Warbler, Pacific Golden Plover and Curlew Sandpiper.
- **Increasing Trend:**

The species that have shown an **increase in numbers** include Rosy Starling, Feral Pigeon, Glossy Ibis, Plain Prinia and the Ashy Prinia
- **Categorisation of Birds:**
 - The study categorised **101** species as "**high concern**", **319** as "**moderate concern**" and **442** into "**low concern**".
 - Out of the species categorised as a high concern, 26% are classified globally by IUCN as "least concern".

Analysis of Species

- **Indian Peacocks:**
 - The numbers of **India's national bird, the Indian Peacock**, has **increased** dramatically over the past few decades.
 - The increase in numbers of the species has been attributed to a combination of the **bird expanding its range** (earlier it was absent in Kerala), **conservation efforts** and associated **penalties for poaching** under **Schedule I of the Wildlife Act**.
 - It is listed as '**Least Concern**' on the **IUCN Red List**.
- **Indian vultures:**
 - It has experienced catastrophic **population declines** starting in the early 1990s.
 - The declines are almost entirely attributable to inadvertent poisoning by the livestock **anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac**.
 - Surveys conducted have shown that **White-rumped Vulture** has **suffered the most severe declines**, followed by **Indian Vulture** and **Egyptian Vulture**.
- **House Sparrow:**
 - The House Sparrow has been found to be **stable across the country** as a whole, although **declining in the major cities**.
 - It has been declared as the "**State Bird of Delhi**" to save the species and enhance awareness about their life and habitat.
 - The reasons for the decline include **decreasing insect populations** (a key part of the diet of sparrow chicks) and **paucity** of suitable **nesting sites**.
 - Moreover, the popular theory that radiation from mobile phone towers is a factor is **not supported** by the findings of this report.
- **Bustards in India:**
 - All the four species of bustards in India (the **Great Indian Bustard**, Macqueen's Bustard, Lesser Florican and Bengal Florican) have suffered **continuous population declines**.
 - The decline is observed due to historical hunting and widespread habitat loss, with their slow growth and reproduction.
- **Waterbirds:**
 - It showed overall **long-term declines**, amongst which migratory shorebirds and gulls and terns appear to have declined the most.
 - Overall, migratory species (both long-distance and within-subcontinent) show steeper declines than residents.

Key Recommendations

- Updation of global and national priorities using conservation assessments.
- Fund conservation efforts on High Concern species and habitats where species have declined.
- Support monitoring efforts by citizen scientists and researchers.
- Promote collaborations between researchers and the public at large

Source: IE