



Black-Necked Crane

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Why in News

Recently, a group of **Buddhist** monks in Tawang district has opposed the Arunachal Pradesh government's renewed push for **hydropower projects**.

The proposed projects would not only affect the **nesting grounds of the endangered Black-Necked Crane** but also threaten several holy Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the region.

Key Points

- **About:**



- Both the sexes are almost of the same size but **male is slightly bigger than female**.
- The upper long neck, head, primary and secondary flight feathers and tail are completely black and **body plumage is pale gray/whitish**.
- A conspicuous **red crown** adorns the head.
- The **juveniles have a brownish head and neck** and plumage is slightly paler than that of an adult.

- **Special Significance:**

The bird is **revered by the community of Monpas** (major Buddhist ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh) as an **embodiment of the sixth Dalai Lama** (Tsangyang Gyatso).

Monpas inhabit the West Kameng and Tawang districts, are essentially Buddhists who follow the **Mahayana sect**.

- **Habitat and Breeding Grounds :**

- The **high altitude wetlands** of the Tibetan plateau , Sichuan (China), and eastern **Ladakh** (India) are the **main breeding ground of the species**, the birds spend winter at lower altitudes.

- In Bhutan and **Arunachal Pradesh**, it only comes **during the winters**.

- In Arunachal Pradesh, it can be seen in three areas:

- **Sangti valley** in West Kameng district.
- **Zemithang** in Tawang district.
- **Chug valley** in Tawang district.

- **Threats:**

- **Damage to the eggs and chicks**, caused by feral dogs.

- **Loss of habitat** due to human pressure (Development Projects) on the wetlands.

- Increased grazing pressure on the limited pastures near the wetlands.

- **Steps for their Conservation:**

World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India) in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Protection, Jammu & Kashmir, has been working towards conservation of high altitude wetlands, with **black-necked cranes as a priority species in Ladakh region**.

In Arunachal Pradesh, WWF is working for the conservation of the small wintering population.

- **Protection Status:**

- **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened

- **CITES:** Appendix I

- **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I

Source:TH