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Bar-headed Goose Spotted in Kerala

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Why in News

A **Bar-headed Goose** has been spotted in the **wetlands of Karingali Puncha** in Pathanamthitta District of **Kerala**.

- In general, large flocks visit the **Koonthankulam bird sanctuary at Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu**. It is very rare that the bird is **spotted in Kerala**.
- The **wetlands of Karingali Puncha** is a major birding spot in the district. It reported the **highest bird count in the Asian Waterbird Census of 2015**.



Bar-headed Goose

- **Scientific Name:** Anser Indicus
- **Habitat**
 - Bar-headed geese are found in **central China and Mongolia** and they breed there.
 - They start migration to the **Indian sub-continent** during the winter and stay till the end of the season.
- **Special Feature**
 - They are one of the birds which can **fly even at very high altitude**. They come to India and return to their homes by **crossing the Himalayan ranges** - one of the most high-altitude migrations in the world.
 - The capacity of bar-headed geese to **transport and consume oxygen** at high rates in **hypoxia distinguishes this species** from similar lowland waterfowl.

- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern

Note

Hypoxia: It is a condition of the body in which the tissues are starved of oxygen.

Asian Waterbird Census

- Every January, thousands of **volunteers** across Asia and Australasia visit wetlands in their country and count waterbirds. This citizen science programme is the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC).
- The AWC was **initiated in 1987** in the Indian subcontinent. The census covers the **entire East Asian – Australasian Flyway** and a **large part of the Central Asian Flyway**.
- The main **objective** is to obtain annual information of waterbird populations at wetlands in the region, the status of wetlands, and encourage interest in waterbirds and wetlands among the public and thereby promote conservation.
- The AWC is an **integral part of** the global waterbird monitoring programme, the **International Waterbird Census (IWC)**, coordinated by Wetlands International.

Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary

- Situated in Tamil Nadu, it was **declared as a sanctuary in 1994**.
- It is an important protected area known for the **congregation of migratory and local water birds** – the grey pelican, the painted stork, the greater flamingo, the bar-headed goose, the open bill stork, the black ibis and other common species like egrets, cormorants and herons, among others.

Source: TH