



Delay Arrival of Migratory Birds in Kashmir Valley

Why in News?

Due to less rainfall in the [Kashmir Valley](#), the [wetlands](#) are left severely dry adversely affecting the arrival of **migratory birds**.

Key Points

- **Decline in Migratory Birds:**
 - Each year, by late September or October, lakhs of migratory birds from **Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Northern Europe migrate to the Kashmir Valley's wetlands**, with [Hokersar Wetland](#) being the most significant site.
 - In 2024, it noted a sharp decline in bird arrivals compared to previous years.
- **Factors Contributing to Fewer Birds:**
 - Experts attribute the decline to [global warming](#), with prolonged summers delaying the onset of winter, resulting in a 10-15 day delay in bird arrivals.
 - **Reduced rainfall and dry wetlands have worsened the situation**, contributing to fewer birds this November. However, experts expect numbers to rise as weather conditions improve.
- **Shrinking Wetlands and Habitat Loss:**
 - Experts have raised **concerns about the shrinking Hokersar wetland**, also known as the 'Queen of Wetlands.'
 - From **1969 to 2008, the wetland's area reduced from 18.75 sq km to 13 sq km**, with a loss of 150 hectares of marshy land within it.
- **Future Threat to Migratory Birds:**
 - **Without proper action** to restore and protect these wetlands, the **future of both the habitats and the migratory birds** that depend on them **remains uncertain**.

Hokersar Wetland

- **Location:**
 - The Hokersar wetland, a [Ramsar site](#), is situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It is **also known as the 'Queen Wetland of Kashmir'**.
- **Geographic Setting:**
 - It is a natural, perennial **wetland that is part of the [Jhelum](#) basin** and is located in the **northwest Himalayan biogeographic province of Kashmir**, at the foot of the snow-draped [Pir Panchal range](#).
- **Water Source:**
 - The wetland receives water from the **Doodhganga River, a tributary of the Jhelum**.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
 - **It is home to the last remaining reedbeds of Kashmir** and serves as a **critical pathway for 68 waterfowl species**.
 - These birds, **migrating from regions like Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Europe**, include species such as the **little cormorant**, [common shelduck](#), **large egret**, and **great crested grebe**.
 - The wetland is **vital for local biodiversity**, offering food sources, spawning grounds, and nurseries for fish, along with breeding habitats for various species.

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