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Important Facts For Prelims (20th May 2019)

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SIMBEX 2019

- The **26th edition** of the annual **Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise, SIMBEX-2019**, is being conducted in the **South China Sea** from 16th May to 22th May, 2019.
- In addition to Indian Navy ships Kolkata and Shakti, a long range maritime patrol aircraft Poseidon-8I (P8I) is participating in the SIMBEX-19.
- The bilateral exercise SIMBEX that was **started in the year 1993** has grown in tactical and operational complexities and progressed from a basic anti-submarine exercise to a more complex maritime exercise which includes advanced air defence operations, anti-air, surface weapon firings and tactical exercises .
- In the year **2018**, the exercise took place in the Indian Ocean, **off the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.

Survey of Frugivore Birds

Recently, the Nature Conservation Foundation have mapped different frugivore (fruit eater) birds and their interactions that are important for the forest ecosystem.

- The **study carried out in Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh** and looked at 43 tree species and 48 frugivore bird species that were seen visiting them.
- The trees were classified into **small, medium** and **large-seeded**.
- The large-seeded trees mainly depended on hornbills and imperial pigeons for their dispersal.
- The medium-size seeded trees were visited by bulbuls, barbets along with hornbills and imperial pigeons. Though the frequency of visits was similar for all four bird species, the number of fruits removed from trees was high for hornbills.
- **Hornbills**, one among the large-sized frugivores, were the **top seed dispersers** and **also the most threatened**. They are hunted for meat, and the tribal communities use their feathers for headdresses.

- It was noted that, when the **number of hornbills decreased in an area, the regeneration of large-seeded plants that were primarily dispersed from them was also affected.**
- Bulbuls visited small and medium-sized seed trees in large numbers, they did not handle the seed well.
- **Plants depend on frugivore birds to disperse the seeds at favourable sites,** which have low competition and predation pressures, to expand their geographic range.

NOTE: The Nature Conservation Foundation is a non-governmental wildlife conservation and research organisation based in Mysore.