Egyptian Vulture

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in News?

Recently, conservationists have raised alarm over the near disappearance (functionally extinct) of the Egyptian vulture from Tamil Nadu.

- **Common Name –** Egyptian vulture.
- **Scientific Name –** Neophron percnopterus.
- **Family –** Accipitridae.
- **Size - *Smallest of the Old-World vultures***, measuring about 55–65 cm in length with a wingspan of 1.5 to 1.7 metres.
- **Habitat -** Thrives in open, arid, and semi-arid landscapes, preferring grasslands, savannas, and mountainous regions.
- **Distribution –** Southern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent.
- **Indian Subspecies –** *Neophron percnopterus ginginianus* (resident); migrants from Africa/the Middle East visit in winter.
- **Appearance –** It is a ***bald, bright yellow-to-orange face;*** a slender, black-tipped beak; and a spiked neck ruff.



- **Scavenger Function –** Removes animal carcasses, maintaining healthy ecosystems.

- **Kota tribes** – Their leather-working practices unintentionally supported vulture populations by providing carcasses.
- **Threats –** Decline caused by veterinary drugs, electrocution from power lines, accidental poisoning, nesting cliff disturbance, and reduced natural food due to changing livestock practices.

Diclofenac and NSAIDs' presence in cattle carcasses poisoned vultures, causing kidney failure and mass population decline.

Conservation Status	
IUCN Red List	Endangered
CITES	Appendix II
Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972	Schedule I

- **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) –** Proposed to the Tamil Nadu government to establish an Egyptian Vulture Conservation Breeding Programme.

Reference

The Hindu | Vulture

