El Niño Threatens Kolhapur Migratory Birds

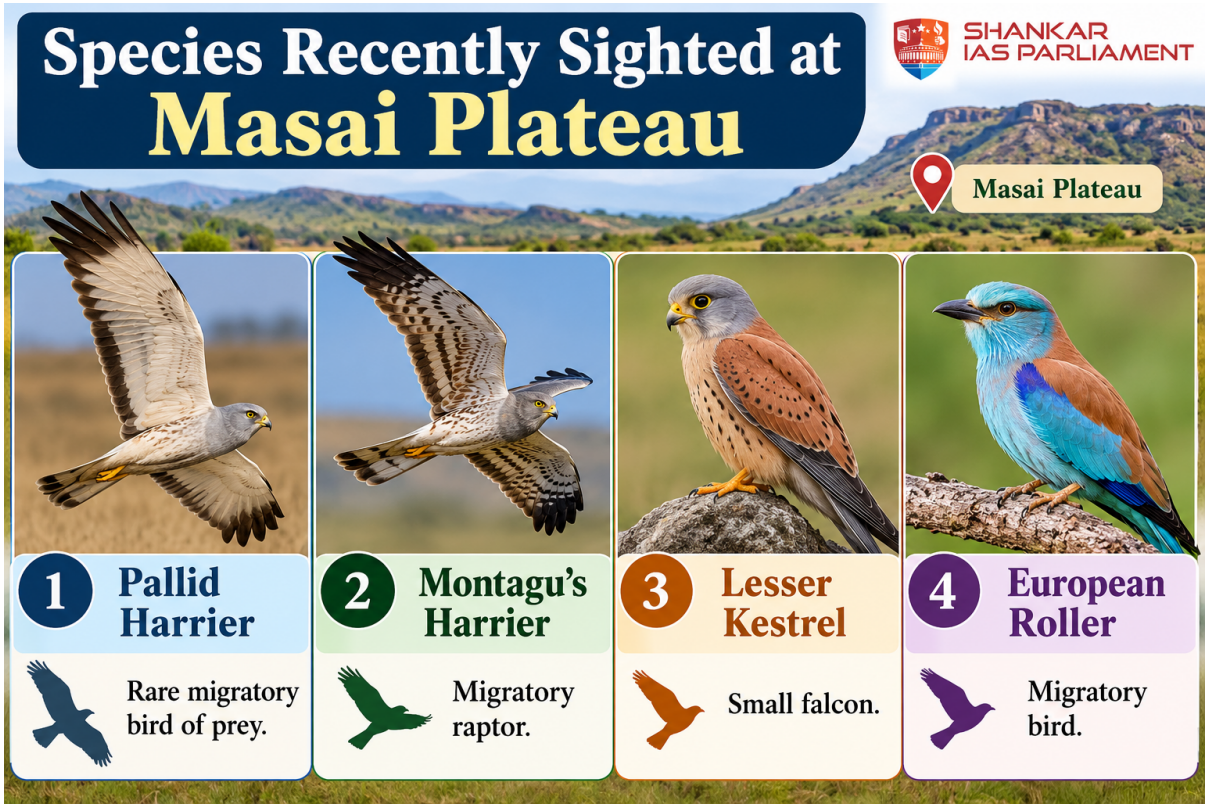
Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in News?

Migratory bird populations in Kolhapur district, Maharashtra, are projected to decline as a result of changing weather patterns linked to El Niño.

Migratory Bird Species Observed in Kolhapur

- Migratory birds predominantly arrive in Kolhapur during October and November.
- These species migrate from regions including Central Asia, Russia, Kazakhstan, the Asian grasslands, and Africa.
- The following species have been recently observed at Masai Plateau:
    - Pallid Harrier – a rare migratory bird of prey.
    - Montagu's Harrier – a migratory raptor.
    - Lesser Kestrel – a small falcon.
    - European Roller – a migratory bird.



Impact of El Niño on Migratory Birds

- Variability in rainfall patterns alters vegetation growth and modifies habitat conditions.
- Declines in vegetation and insect populations lead to reduced food availability for migratory birds.
- The reduction in water body size decreases the availability of suitable wetland habitats.
- Migratory birds may modify traditional migration routes to locate adequate food resources.
- Alterations in migration timing and physical condition can influence subsequent breeding cycles.

Important Bird Habitats in Kolhapur

- Kolhapur encompasses multiple grassland and wetland ecosystems that provide critical support for migratory bird populations.
- Important wetlands surveyed include:
    - Rankala Lake.
    - Kalamba Lake.
    - Rajaram Lake.
    - Mahalakshmi Lake, Peth Vadgaon.

A bird census conducted across these four lakes documented the presence of 94 distinct bird species.

Reference

ETV | Pallid Harrier and European Roller at Masai Plateau

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