

European Bee-eater Spotted in Chennai

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

Recently, a European bee-eater was documented for the first time in Chennai at Broken Bridge, adjacent to the Adyar River Estuary.

- The observation was submitted to **eBird**, a global bird observation database, where it was reviewed and accepted.
- The bird was identified as a juvenile based on its plumage as well as distinctive throat and wing markings.
- Additionally, a Eurasian wryneck, another rare species, was observed on the same day.



A colourful migratory bird known for its bee-hunting skills.

Feature	Details
 Common name	European bee-eater
 Scientific name	<i>Merops apiaster</i>
 Family	Meropidae
 Order	Coraciiformes
 Habitat	Open country, grasslands, scrub, riverbanks and areas suitable for nesting
 Geographic distribution	Europe, western Asia and parts of Africa
 Diet	Primarily flying insects, including bees and wasps
 Migration	Migratory; many populations move to Africa for the non-breeding season
 Chennai sighting	Broken Bridge, Adyar estuary
 Significance	First recorded sighting in Chennai, according to the report

Juvenile appearance

- Duller colours than adults
- Less distinct throat patch
- Greenish-brown overall appearance

• Identification Features

- Exhibits brightly coloured plumage, particularly with blue-green hues.
- Displays a distinctive yellow throat.
- Presents a broad dark trailing edge along the wing, as observed during identification.
- Feeds primarily by capturing flying insects, such as bees.

European Bee-eater vs. Blue-tailed Bee-eater

Feature	European bee-eater	Blue-tailed bee-eater
Scientific name	Merops apiaster	Merops philippinus
Family	Meropidae	Meropidae
Distinguishing feature	Yellow throat and characteristic dark trailing wing edge	Blue tail and a different combination of plumage markings
Status in Chennai	Extremely rare; first recorded sighting reported	Seen more regularly
Diet	Flying insects	Flying insects

Eurasian Wryneck: Notable Rare Sighting



- **Scientific name** - Jynx torquilla

- This species belongs to the woodpecker family, Picidae.
- It uses camouflage to blend into tree bark.
- Its diet consists primarily of ants and other small invertebrates.
- The species is named for its distinctive snake-like threat display.
- **Distinctive Behaviour** - When threatened, the Eurasian wryneck exhibits the following behaviors:
 - It elongates and twists its neck.
 - It turns its head from side to side.
 - It produces a hissing sound.
- This behavior can startle predators by mimicking both the appearance and sound of a snake.
- Notably, despite its unusual behavior, the Eurasian wryneck is classified as a woodpecker, not a snake or a member of the bee-eater family.

Reference

[The Hindu | European Bee-eater Spotted in Chennai](#)

