Ferruginous Pochard

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

Why in News?

A lone Ferruginous Pochard was found among a flock of Common Pochards at Amoor lake Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu recently.

- **Scientific Name -** Aythya nyroca.
- It is commonly known as the *White-eyed Pochard or Ferruginous Duck.*
- It is a medium-sized diving duck known for its striking mahogany plumage and "shy" nature.
- **Key Identification -** The Ferruginous Pochard is often mistaken for the Tufted Duck or the Common Pochard, but a few specific markers set it apart:
- **Coloration-** Adults have a rich, dark chestnut (ferruginous) head, breast, and flanks.
- **The "White Eye"** - Breeding males have a distinct, piercing white iris, while females and juveniles have dark brown eyes.
- **Undertail -** It has a very prominent pure white undertail patch, which is a key field mark even when the bird is swimming.
- **In Flight -** Look for a broad, bright white wing stripe that extends almost to the wingtips, contrasting sharply with the dark upperparts.
- **Habitat -** Unlike many other diving ducks that prefer open water, the Ferruginous Pochard is a specialist of ***shallow, heavily vegetated wetlands.***
- **Distribution -** Historically widespread across Eurasia and North Africa, it is now a species of conservation concern.
- **Behavior & Diet – Feeding** - They are ***omnivorous.*** While they are diving ducks, they also frequently "upend" (dabble) like mallards to reach aquatic plants, seeds, mollusks, and small fish.
- **Social Life -** They are generally less gregarious than other pochards, often seen in small groups or pairs, though they may join large mixed-

species flocks during winter.

- **Nesting** - They build concealed nests on the ground near water or even floating nests in thick reed beds.
- **Conservation Status** – **IUCN** - Near Threatened.
- **Threats -** Habitat Loss, Human Disturbance, Hybridization.



Reference

The Hindu | Ferruginous Pochard

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