Golden-Headed Cisticola

Why in News?

According to bird watchers, the recent discovery of a golden-headed cisticola in the southern Western Ghats marks the 1st sighting after an extensive gap.

- It is a tiny bird, *shines brightly with its golden crown* and captivating song.
- **Scientific Name** – Cisticola exilis.
- **Discovered in** – Mathikettan Shola National Park, Idukki, Kerala.
- It is known as ***Bright-Capped Cisticola***.
- **Habitat –** Grasslands, sub-coastal areas, wetlands, savannas, woodlands, scrublands, swamp margins, rivers, and irrigated farmlands.
- **Distribution** – Western Australia, north-east to Darwin, Cape York and *India* and southern China.

Golden-Headed Cisticola has been observed in parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, northern Kerala and 1st time found in the southern part of the Palakkad gap in the Western Ghats.

- **Morphology –** Small, sandy-colored bird with short tail, cream-colored underside and brown upper side.
- Streaks of black or dark brown on the upper part of their body, black wings, golden head, throat is white and back of their neck is dull shade of gold.



- **Sexual dimorphism**
  - **Male** – Has distinct ***golden-orange plumage*** on their head, neck, and chest during breeding.
  - It also has pinkish beaks and black streaks on their backs.
- **Call –** It produces a *variety of sounds distinct from other birds* range from a teewip to

wheezz, whit-whit.

- **Diet –** It is omnivorous, feed on invertebrates such as insects, small slugs, and eat grass seeds.
- **Threats –** Urbanization
    - Land development
    - Changes in agricultural practices
    - Wetland degradation.
- **Conservation Status**
- **IUCN** – Least Concern.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – Schedule II.

References

1. The Hindu| Golden-headed Cisticola
2. Thai National Parks| Bright-capped cisticola
3. Simply Birding| Golden-headed Cisticola's Threats

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