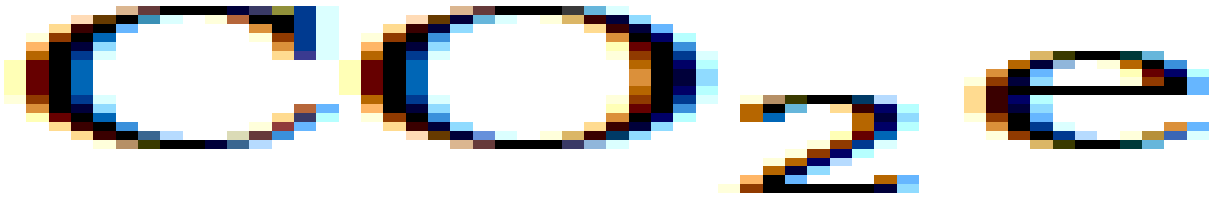
Grassland Birds Census

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance -Science and Technology.*

Why in News?

Recently, the first ever grassland birds census was conducted in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) in Assam.



- **Conducted across** - 185 grassland points within KNPTR
- **Major Findings of the census**
- **Species under threat** - Identified 43 species which are under threat in other major bird habitats in the country due to habitat loss and fragmentation.
- **Identified** - **1** critically endangered species, **2** endangered, 6 vulnerable and **1** species in near threatened category.
- **Habitat analysis** - Birds occupy a variety of grassland ecosystems, with tall, wet grasslands.
- Other common habitats included tall grasslands, short grass/open fields & scrub grasslands.
- **Richest grassland habitats in India** - Maharashtra, Gujarat, and West Bengal are among the richest in terms of grassland bird diversity in India.
- **Threats** - Habitat loss and fragmentation.
- **Emphasis on** - 10 focal species that are either globally threatened or endemic to the Brahmaputra floodplains. These birds are:-
    - Bengal Florican, Swamp Francolin, **Finn's Weaver**, Swamp Grass Babbler, Jerdon's Babbler, Slender-billed Babbler, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Marsh Babbler, Bristled Grassbird, and Indian Grassbird.
- The breeding colony of **Finn's Weaver** was particularly documented.

Quick facts

Finn's weaver

• **Locally called** - 'Tukura sorai'
• **Scientific name** - Ploceus megarhynchus
• **IUCN status** – Endangered.
• This remarkable bird is a LIFER for many birdwatchers
• **Indicator** - Serve as ecological indicators of the health and integrity of floodplain grasslands.
• **Habitat** - Nest-builder atop trees.

*A **Lifer Bird** refers to a bird species that a birder sees and identifies for the first time in their life.*

Reference

Deccan Herald| Grassland Bird Census in Kaziranga

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