

Great Crested Tern

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Why in news?

Recently, a Great Crested Tern, which is seen along coasts and estuaries, was spotted at Singanallur tank in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

- Great Crested Tern are small to medium-sized **seabirds** closely related to the gulls, skimmers and skuas.
- **Scientific name** - *Thalasseus bergii*.
- **Family** - Sternidae.
- It is also known as the Swift Tern, or Crested Tern.
- **Distribution** - It occurs in tropical and warm temperate coastal parts of the Old World from the Atlantic Coast of South Africa, around the Indian Ocean to the Pacific and Australia.
- **Habitat** - It primarily inhabits coastal environments, including estuaries and offshore islands.
- It can also be found in lagoons, harbors, and occasionally further out to sea.
- **Size** - A large tern, about 46-49 cm in length with a wingspan of 125-130 cm.
- **Plumage** - It has dusky-grey upperparts, white underparts, and a deeply forked tail; forehead is white, which helps distinguish it from other terns.
- **Crest** - It sports a shaggy, glossy black crest on its head, which becomes more speckled with white during the non-breeding season.
- **Bill & legs** - The bill is a long, chrome-yellow color, while its legs and feet are black.
- **Diet** - Its primary diet consists of small, schooling pelagic fishlike anchovies and sardines, but it also consumes crustaceans, cephalopods, and insects.
- **Movement** - While many populations are **non-migratory**, birds often disperse widely from their breeding grounds after nesting.

- **Breeding site** - The nest is a shallow scrape in the sand, rock, or coral.
- In some areas, it has adapted to nesting on human-made structures like roofs and artificial islands.
- **Threats** - Egg harvesting, human disturbance at nesting sites, and impacts from commercial fisheries.
- **Conservation Status** -
 - **IUCN** - Least Concern



References

1. [The Hindu | Great Crested Tern](#)
2. [Birdlife | Great Crested Tern](#)
3. [National parks in Thailand | Great Crested Tern](#)