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

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