

Indian swiftlet

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in news?

Recently, the Indian swiftlet made a surprise visit to the Adyar estuary in Chennai.

- Scientific name Aerodramus unicolor.
- **Habitat** Prefers rocky hills, mountainsides, caves and offshore islands that provide suitable nesting caves and disperses to plains during monsoons.
- **Distribution** Found in the hills and coastal areas of <u>Sri Lanka and</u> <u>southwest India</u> (primarily in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu).
- Appearance -
 - Size & Shape It is small with 12cm long, compact swift with a shallow tail fork (unlike the Asian Palm-Swift's deep fork).
 - Coloration Darker brown upperparts, paler brown underparts, and a slightly paler rump.



- **Diet** *Insectivorous* (flees, wasps, bees, locust, etc) catching flying insects mid-air in swift flocks.
- **Breeding** The breeding season occurs mainly from March to June in India.
- **Nesting** Nests are bracket-shaped and attached to vertical cave surfaces. They are made by the male bird using grass, moss, and feathers bound together with thick, whitish saliva.
- **Echolocation** They uses *echolocation* to navigate in dark caves during breeding and roosting.
- Conservation Status
 - IUCN Least Concern
- Threats Habitat destruction, nest harvesting for bird's nest soup, etc.

References

- 1. The Hindu | Indian swiftlet makes a surprise visit
- 2. <u>Birdlife | Indian swiftlet</u>
- 3. eBird | Indian swiftlet

