Japanese sparrowhawk

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Species Conservation*

Why in news?

The 1st documented sighting of the Japanese sparrowhawk in mainland India was recently reported from Chennai's Adyar Estuary, marking a significant addition to India's ornithological records.

- It is a ***small raptor*** native to East Asia, known for its compact size, rounded wings, and finely barred underparts.
- **Scientific name** – Tachyspiza gularis
- **Family –** Accipitridae
- **Distribution –** Breeding range - East Asia (Japan, Korea, eastern China, parts of Russia) & Wintering range - Southeast Asia (Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand).
    - **In India** – Previously recorded in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, but never before on the mainland.

Key Features

- **Size –** 23–30 cm in length; smaller than the Eurasian sparrowhawk, males are typically smaller than females.
- **Plumage –** Males have a blue-grey back and rufous bars on their underparts, while females and juveniles are browner with dark barring on their underparts.



- **Habitat –** They are often found in forests, woodlands, forest edges and even suburban areas and open fields.
- **Flight –** Agile, with rounded wings and shorter tail, adapted for forest hunting.
- **Diet –** Primarily feeds on small forest songbirds, with occasional consumption of medium-sized birds, small mammals, reptiles, and insects.
- **Conservation Status** –
    - **IUCN –** Least Concern.
- **Threats –** Include habitat loss driven by logging and agricultural expansion.

References

1. The Hindu | 1st documented sighting of Japanese sparrowhawk
2. Birds of Singapore | Japanese sparrowhawk
3. Birdlife | Japanese sparrowhawk

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