Northern pintails

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

Why in News?

Northern pintails have arrived at the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, which is a popular winter destination for migratory birds from Siberia, Central Asia, and the Himalayas.

- The Northern Pintail is probably one of the most numerous ***duck species*** in the world.
- **Scientific Name –** Anas acuta.
- **Habitat –** Freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers, saltwater bays, tundra, prairies, flooded fields.
- **Distribution –** It is found across North America, Europe, and **Asia,** with many Siberian breeders crossing the Bering Strait to winter in North America.
- **Size**
  - **Male** - 64-74 cm.
  - **Female** - 21-23 (53-58 cm).
- **Appearance** – Elegant, slender duck with long neck and tail, slim and long-necked.
  - **Males** have a chocolate brown head with a white slash coming up the neck, a white breast, and a mostly grey body and long pointed tail.
  - **Females** are patterned in light brown, known by a pointed tail, a long neck, a grey bill, and more subdued colouration compared to males.



- Forages in wetlands and in fields on agricultural waste grains.
- **Diet –** Mostly eat seeds, insects, grains, molluscs, plant material, etc.

- **Behaviour –** They dabble in wetlands and fields, often mixing with other duck species in the nonbreeding season.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN** – Least Concern.
  - **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** – Schedule II.
- **Threats –** Habitat loss, climate change, vulnerable to wetland degradation, and also sensitive to lead poisoning and avian botulism.

References

1. The Hindu | A winter getaway in Assam's wetlands
2. All about Birds | Northern Pintail
3. Audubon Society | Northern Pintail

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