

Pallid Harrier

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in News?

The Pallid Harrier, a bird that migrates from Central Asia, has reached its roosting ground in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.

- **Scientific name** - *Circus macrourus*
- **Habitat** - It prefers open habitats such as natural grasslands, dry steppes, bogs, and agricultural areas.
 - In India, it prefers grasslands and thin scrub in semi-arid and arid regions and is also found in the high elevation shola grasslands of the Western Ghats.
- **Distribution** - It breeds in southern Europe, Central Asia, and Iran, and winters mainly in Africa, India, and Southeast Asia.
- **Appearance** -
 - **Size** - A ***medium-sized raptor***, measuring 40-48 cm in length with a wingspan of 95-120 cm and weights around 235-550 g.
 - It exhibits sexual ***dimorphism***, meaning males and females have distinct plumages.
 - **Males** - Pale or "ghostly" grey above and white below, with narrow black wedges at the wingtips.
 - **Females** - Brown above with white upper tail coverts (earning them the nickname "ringtails") and buff underparts streaked with brown. They have a well-defined facial pattern.
 - **Juveniles** - Rufous (reddish-brown) and have a distinct whitish collar or "boa" around the neck.



- **Prey** - It feeds on rodents, such as mice, voles, lemmings, ground squirrels, small terrestrial birds, also consume lizards, other small reptiles, frogs, and insects, such as locusts and dragonflies.
- **Conservation Status** -
 - **IUCN** - Near Threatened
 - **Wild Life Protection Act, 1972** - Schedule IV
- **Threats** - Habitat destruction due to burning (natural and man-caused), conversion into farming lands, or over grazing.

Quick Fact

Harrier Watch Project

- It is primarily a ***scientific and citizen science initiative*** for monitoring raptor birds in India.
- Objective - To monitor the wintering populations of harriers, map their roosting sites, and assess the impact of grassland loss on these species.
- Organization - Housed at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in Bengaluru, India.
- Focuses on the conservation of ***6 species of migratory harrier raptors*** that visit the Indian subcontinent during winter -
 - **6 species** - Western Marsh Harriers, Montagu's Harrier, Pallid Harrier, Hen Harrier, Pied Harrier, and Eastern Marsh Harriers
- **Findings** - Indicates that the number of harriers is declining due to changing land use patterns and habitat loss.

References

1. [The Hindu | Pallid Harrier](#)
2. [Peregrine fund | Pallid Harrier](#)



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering