Ringed Eurasian Whimbrel & Tibetan Sand-Plover

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

Why in News?

Recently, researchers recorded the resighting of a ringed Eurasian whimbrel in Kozhikode, Kerala, more than 6 years after it was first marked at the Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu Community Reserve.

Key Highlights

- A Tibetan Sand-Plover (Anarhynchus atrifrons / Charadrius atrifrons), also banded in Mumbai previously, was recorded at Chavakkad beach, Thrissur now.

Parameter	Eurasian Whimbrel (Numenius phaeopus)	Tibetan Sand-Plover (Anarhynchus atrifrons)
Family	Scolopacidae (Scolopacid waders / Curlews)	Charadriidae (Plovers & Lapwings)
Markings	Fitted with a unique black flag on its right leg (standard flag protocol for waders across the 5 southern Indian states) and a metal identification ring on its left leg.	Photographed with **2 white leg flags** bearing the code 'HZN' on its right leg and a metal ring on its left leg.
Habitat	Intertidal mudflats, estuaries, and sandy beaches	Coastal shores, estuarine mudflats, high-altitude lakes
Breeding Grounds	Arctic/Subarctic Europe and Northern Asia	Tibetan Plateau and Trans-Himalayan high wetlands
IUCN Status	Least Concern (LC)	Least Concern (LC)
Significance	Confirms site fidelity, demonstrating that migratory shorebirds return to specific wintering grounds along the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) after migrating to breeding grounds in northern Europe/Central Asia across multiple annual cycles.	Illustrates intra-country coastal movement pathways and stopover dynamics for waders migrating along India's western coastline.

Significance for Conservation

- **Validation of the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) -** Reinforces India's role as a vital wintering ground along the CAF, highlighting the ecological dependency of transboundary shorebirds on the Malabar coastline.
- **Role of Bird Tagging -** Demonstrates how leg-flagging and ringing by institutions like the BNHS track individual survival rates, longevity, migration routes, and wintering site persistence over long durations.
- **Importance of Protected Coastal Habitats -** Highlights the conservation value of sites like

the ***Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu Community Reserve***, India's first community reserve declared specifically for wetland and shorebird protection as critical refuelling hubs for migratory waders.

Reference

The Hindu | Ringed Eurasian whimbrel

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