

Satellite-Tagged Amur Falcons

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Environment

Why in News?

Recently, conservation scientists and wildlife authorities in Manipur confirmed the triumphant return of satellite-tagged Amur falcons (*Falco amurensis*) to their staging grounds in the Tamenglong district.

Amur falcon (*Falco amurensis*)

- The Amur falcon (*Falco amurensis*) is the **world's longest-distance migrating raptor**.
- **Size** - Averaging the size of a pigeon or an apple and weighing around 120 to 170 grams.
- These extraordinary birds cover an annual round-trip journey of up to 20,000 kilometres across continents and oceans.
- **Breeding Grounds** - The falcons spend the northern summer breeding in southeastern Siberia, Mongolia, and Northern China.
- **Wintering Grounds** - They winter in Southern and East Africa, spending time in countries like Somalia, Kenya, Mozambique, and South Africa.
- **The Migratory Route** - Traveling across 23 countries, the birds undertake the longest regular overwater passage of any raptor.
- Breeding during the summer in **Siberia and Northern China**, Amur falcons congregate in massive flocks across Northeast India (particularly Nagaland and Manipur) around October to feed on swarming termites and insects.
- From India, they undertake a grueling non-stop flight across the **Arabian Sea** (~3,000 km over open water) to wintering grounds in **Southern and Eastern Africa**, before reversing the route in spring.
- **Satellite Telemetry Insights** - Radio-tagging initiatives have provided precise tracking data, revealing exact flyways, wind-drift adaptations, and critical stopover sites that require urgent international protection.

Conservation Success

- **From Hunting to Protection** - Historically, Manipur and neighboring Nagaland faced severe challenges with mass trapping and hunting of Amur falcons for local consumption.
- Through rigorous community-led conservation campaigns, religious leaders' appeals, strict enforcement of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, and ecotourism initiatives.
- Thus, these regions transformed from the "falcon capital of the world for hunting" into global champions of raptor safety.
- **Global Ecological Indicator** - As apex insectivores, Amur falcons act as bio-indicators of agricultural health and wetland vitality across multiple continents, underscoring the necessity of cross-border environmental cooperation.



Reference

[Hindustan Times | Satellite-tagged Amur falcons](#)