

## Tokara Leaf Warbler

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### Why in News?

Recently, Japan has officially identified a distinct bird species after 45 years, marking its first new bird discovery since the early 1980s.

- **Scientific Name** - *Phylloscopus amamiensis*.
- **Common Name** - Tokara Leaf Warbler.
- **Genus** - *Phylloscopus*.
- **Family** - Phylloscopidae (leaf warblers).
- **Habitat & Distribution** - Found exclusively in the Tokara Islands, Japan (endemic).

### Features

- **Size** - Small songbird roughly 10-12 cm in length, weighing around 6-9 grams.
- **Appearance** - It is a "*cryptic species*," meaning it is nearly identical in appearance to Ijima's Leaf Warbler (by sight alone) but clearly distinct based on DNA analyses.
  - **Ijima's leaf warbler** (*Phylloscopus ijimae*) - A rare migratory songbird only found in the Izu Islands (endemic) south of Tokyo, Japan.
  - **IUCN** - Vulnerable.
- **Colouration** - Uniformly greyish crown (lacking darker or paler stripes), greener upperparts, and mainly whitish underparts with contrastingly pale yellow undertail-coverts.
- **Beak** - Pale orange lower mandible.
- **Wings & Tail** - Features narrow pale tips to the greater coverts, which form a thin, sometimes very indistinct, pale wing-bar.
- **Song** - Distinct vocalisation patterns; bird song analysis helped differentiate it from Ijima's leaf warbler.



- **Diet** - Insectivorous.
- **Nest Type** - Globular nests built from bamboo leaves, tree leaves, lined with feathers, roots, and pine needles.
- **Reproduction** - Oviparous (egg-laying).
- **Risk** - The bird is only known to breed on one island, making it vulnerable.
- **Threats** - Habitat loss, climate change and invasive species mean conservation is urgent.
- **Status** - Not yet formally assessed, but scientists recommend Vulnerable classification, like Ijima's Leaf Warbler.

## Quick Fact

### Tokara Islands

- **Location** - It is situated between Yakushima and Amami Oshima in southern Japan.
- These islands are part of the *active Ryukyu Arc*, which is crucial for understanding subduction zones and the Pacific "Ring of Fire".
- Active volcanoes like Mount Otake on Nakanoshima.
- **Home to Tokara Horse/Pony** - A Japanese indigenous horse breed which is declared a *Natural Monument* under Japan's Cultural Properties Protection Law.

## Reference

1. [Indian Express | Tokara Leaf Warbler](#)
2. [Novataxa | Tokara Leaf Warbler](#)