White-naped Tit

Why in News?

A group of bird enthusiasts traced the rare white-naped tit for the first time at Kadakola village in the Kappatagudda hills, North Karnataka.

- It is a ***passerine bird*** (any bird of the order Passeriformes) in the tit family Paridae.
- **Scientific Name -** Machlolophus nuchalis.
- **Size** - White-naped tit is a 12-13 cm medium-sized ***shy*** bird.
- It is the only pied (black-and-white) tit in India.
- **Appearance –** It has the wing-coverts, crown, sides of head, chin, throat, a ventral band running down the breast and belly to the vent black.
- The cheeks below the eye, the ear-coverts and a patch on the nape are white.
- The wing has white on the outer primaries and the base of the secondaries. The last tertiaries are completely white.



- **Nesting** - It prefers nesting and roosting only in cavities made by coppersmith barbets and woodpeckers on old trees of Indian frankincense Toothbrush Tree, Gum Arabica, and Indian Jujube.
- **Distribution -** It is very patchily distributed and endemic to India.
  - In India, it is found in only some parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, the Eastern Ghats of Southern Andhra Pradesh, Northern Tamil Nadu, Haryana, and Southern Karnataka.
  - In South Karnataka, it's documented only in the ***Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.***
- **Habitat** – Found in dry thorny scrub forests in two disjunct populations, in western India and southern India.
- This species is and has been vulnerable to extinction, especially because of the
- **Diet** - It mainly feeds on insects and nectar from flowers of caper berries (Chippuri/Kariuppi).
- **Vocal -** Quite vocal, commonly gives a 2- to 5-noted high-pitched "psi-psi-psi" ending in a harsh churrr.
- **Conservation status**
  - **IUCN** – Vulnerable.
- **Threats -** scarcity of suitable habitats, particularly nest cavities made by woodpeckers.

References

1. Times of India | White-naped tit
2. iNaturalist | White-naped Tit

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