White-rumped Vulture

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

Why in News?

Recently, experts have reported stable vulture numbers in Wayanad despite reduced breeding, with invasive plants and human activity affecting nesting areas.

- **Scientific Name –** Gyps bengalensis.
- **Family –** Accipitridae.
- **Habitat –** Mostly plains with open areas, light woodland, villages and cities. Occasionally found in hilly regions.
- **Distribution –** Native to ***India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Myanmar, and Cambodia.***
- **Extinction -** Possibly extinct in Afghanistan, Iran, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Extinct in China and Malaysia
- **Key Identification – Size –** Medium-sized vulture (75–85 cm).
- **Adult –** Mostly black body feathers with a white ring of feathers around the neck (neck-ruff) and white feathers on the lower back (rump).
- Wings have silvery feathers, the head and neck are dark, and the bill is short, thick, and silver-colored.
- **Juvenile –** Brown body feathers with white streaks on wing and back feathers and soft down on the head and neck.



- **Behaviour –** Aggregates at carcasses and uses regular feeding sites. ***Highly social, forms large flocks and communal roosts (gathers together to rest or sleep).***
- **Breeding –** Breeds in colonies in tall trees, often near human habitation.
- **Diet –** Obligate scavenger feeding on fresh and decaying carcasses (dead animals).
- **Conservation Status –**
  - **IUCN –** Critically Endangered.
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 –** Schedule I
- **Threats –** Rapid population ***decline due to Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)*** such as diclofenac, aceclofenac, and ketoprofen used in livestock, causes kidney failure and visceral gout in vultures.
- **Other threats –** Habitat loss, deforestation, poisoning, electrocution, collisions, and reduced food availability from changes in livestock management.

Vultures of India
• There are ***9 species*** of vultures, five of which belong to the genus Gyps, and the remaining four are monotypic. • Oriental White-backed Vulture – *G.bengalensis* • The Long-billed Vulture – *G.indicus* • Slender-billed Vulture – *G.tenuirostris* • The Himalayan Vulture – *G.himalayensis* • The Eurasian Griffon – *G.fulvus* • Egyptian Vulture – *Neophron percnopterus* • Red-headed Vulture – *Sarcogyps calvus* • Cinereous Vulture – *Aegypius monachus* • Bearded Vulture (Lammergeier) – *Gypaetus barbatus*

References

1. TH | White-rumped Vulture
2. IUCN | White-rumped Vulture

