Syllabus subtopic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Prelims and Mains focus: About the waterbird census in CWS; About Indian skimmer; IUCN

News: The annual bird census will commence in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) and surrounding wetlands in the Godavari mangrove cover on the east coast from Saturday.

About the census

- The wildlife management authorities are all set to carry out the twoday census of the avian species, assessing the threats and challenges being faced by the water birds.
- The census aims at documentation of migratory and resident birds to be able to prepare a better management plan of the complex ecosystem that supports the waterbird species. It will provide a picture of its present state and results of the conservation being done in the wildlife sanctuary and outside.
- At least 50 personnel — research scholars, volunteers, and bird watchers — will conduct the census. The prime focus will be on the 235.7 sq km area under the CWL and Kumbabhisekham site in the Godavari mangroves that serves as the safe habitat for many bird species.

About the Indian Skimmer

- Indian Skimmer, a water-bird species, has started visiting the Godavari mangroves for three years. The species can be sighted only in three places in the country, including the Chambal river in Central India.

- The conservation status of the Indian Skimmer is ‘vulnerable’, according to the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).
About IUCN

- It is an international organisation working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
- Founded in 1948 in Fontainebleau, France.
- HQ : Gland, Switzerland
- It is involved in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy, lobbying and education.
- Over the past decades, IUCN has widened its focus beyond conservation ecology and now incorporates issues related to gender equality, poverty alleviation and sustainable business in its projects.
- It publishes IUCN Red List which assesses the conservation status of species worldwide
- IUCN has observer and consultative status at the United Nations
- Both Governments and NGOs are its members.

About IUCN red list of threatened species:

- The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is the world’s most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species.
- It uses a set of quantitative criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of thousands of species. These criteria are relevant to most species and all regions of the world. With its strong scientific base, the IUCN Red List is recognized as the most authoritative guide to the status of biological diversity.

The IUCN Red List Categories:

- The IUCN Red List Categories define the extinction risk of species assessed. Nine categories extend from NE (Not Evaluated) to EX (Extinct).
- Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU) species are considered to be threatened with extinction.