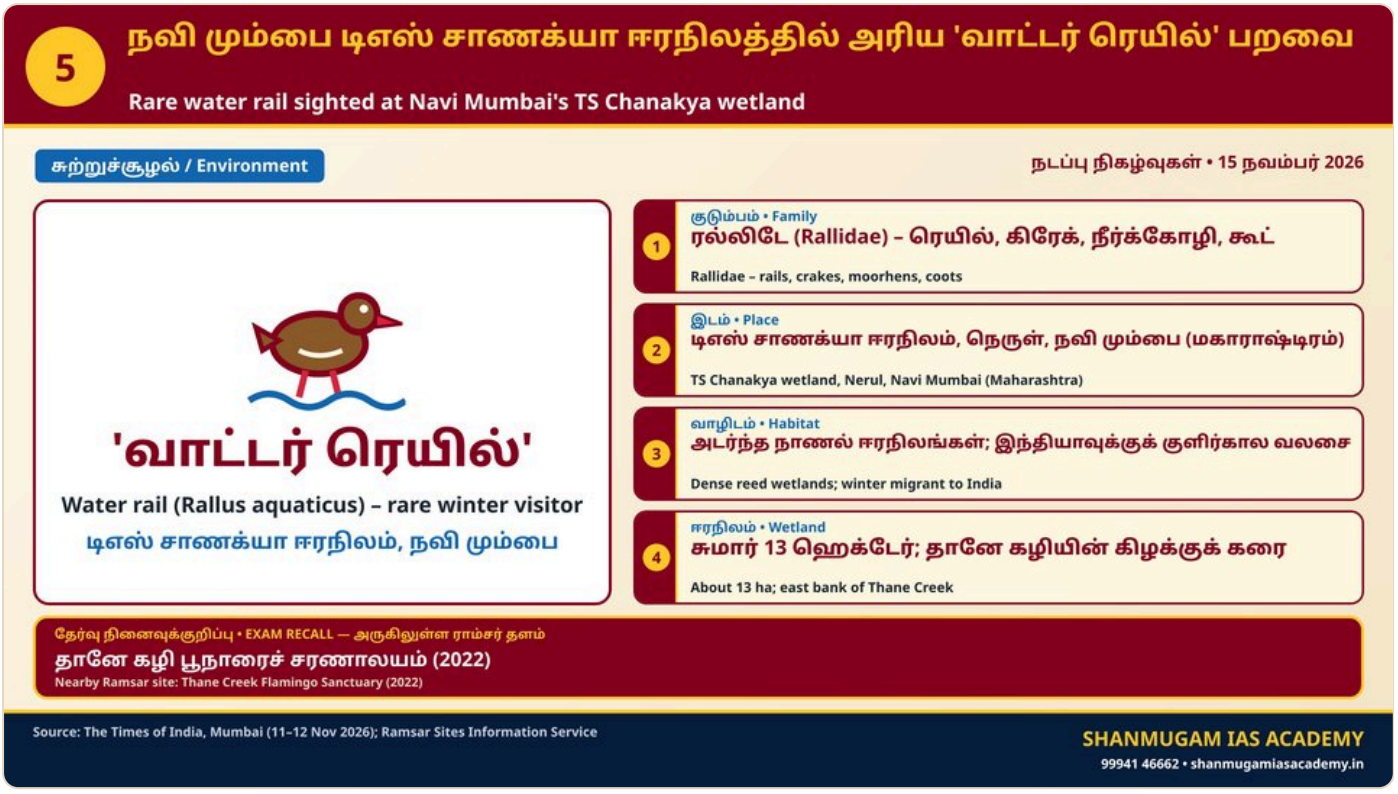
Rare water rail sighted at Navi Mumbai's TS Chanakya wetland

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News

Bird photographer Yash Shetty spotted a rare Water Rail (Rallus aquaticus) at the TS Chanakya wetland in Nerul, Navi Mumbai, on 11 November 2026, The Times of India reported. It appeared unexpectedly while photographers were shooting Baillon's crakes feeding there. The species was last recorded in the Mumbai region in 2018, so this is reported to be the first record in about eight years. Shy and secretive, the bird lives in dense, reed-filled wetlands across Europe, Asia and North Africa; it is a winter migrant to India. The wetland – about 13 hectares of tidal wetland on the east bank of Thane Creek, next to the maritime training institute 'Training Ship Chanakya' – is a key roost of lesser flamingos. The report says the sighting underlines the need to protect Navi Mumbai's wetlands.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Bird	Water rail – Rallus aquaticus
Family	Rallidae – rails, crakes, moorhens, coots
Place	TS Chanakya wetland, Nerul, Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra)
Date	11 November 2026 (reported)
Previous record	Mumbai region, 2018

Point	Details
Habitat	Dense reed wetlands; winter migrant to India
Wetland	About 13 ha; east bank of Thane Creek
Nearby Ramsar site	Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary (2022)
Legal cover	Wetlands Rules, 2017 – Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Background

- Ornithology: rails belong to the family Rallidae, which also includes crakes, moorhens, coots and the purple swamphen. Their laterally flattened bodies and long toes help them slip through dense reeds. The water rail has a red bill and a grey-brown body; because of its wide range, the IUCN lists it as 'Least Concern'.
- Ramsar Convention: signed in 1971 at Ramsar, Iran, to conserve wetlands of international importance; India joined in 1982. Ramsar sites whose ecological character is under threat are placed on the 'Montreux Record'; in India, Keoladeo (Rajasthan) and Loktak (Manipur) are on it. 2 February is World Wetlands Day.
- Law: in India, wetlands are regulated by the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; every State must set up a State Wetlands Authority. Coastal wetlands are also protected under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification; Being an intertidal wetland, the TS Chanakya wetland falls in CRZ-I, according to environmentalists.
- Geography: Thane Creek is the estuarine inlet separating Salsette Island (Mumbai) from the mainland (Navi Mumbai); its mangroves and mudflats draw thousands of flamingos. The 'Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary' was declared a Ramsar site in August 2022. The flamingos mostly arrive from Kutch, Gujarat, around November.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu has the most Ramsar sites in India. The State's first Ramsar site is the Point Calimere (Kodiyakkarai) Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary in Nagapattinam district (2002). Wetlands such as Vedanthangal, Pallikaranai marsh, Kaliveli and Koonthankulam are key stopovers for migratory birds; Rallidae birds such as the moorhen, coot and purple swamphen are common in Tamil Nadu's tanks.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Bird: Water rail – Rallus aquaticus; Family: Rallidae – rails, crakes, moorhens, coots; Place: TS Chanakya wetland, Nerul, Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra); Date: 11 November 2026 (reported).

What is the background to this news?

Ornithology: rails belong to the family Rallidae, which also includes crakes, moorhens, coots and the purple swamphen. Their laterally flattened bodies and long toes help them slip through dense reeds.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. The water rail (Rallus aquaticus) seen in Navi Mumbai belongs to which bird family?

A) Rallidae

B) Ardeidae

C) Anatidae

D) Phoenicopteridae

Answer: A – Explanation: Rallidae – rails, crakes, moorhens, coots. Ardeidae – herons, egrets; Anatidae – ducks; Phoenicopteridae – flamingos.

2. The TS Chanakya wetland lies on the east bank of which creek, whose flamingo sanctuary is a Ramsar site?

A) Vasai Creek

B) Thane Creek

C) Mahim Creek

D) Manori Creek

Answer: B – Explanation: Thane Creek – its flamingo sanctuary became a Ramsar site in Aug 2022. Nandur Madhameshwar was Maharashtra's first.

3. The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 were framed under which Act?

A) Wild Life Act, 1972

B) Forest Act, 1980

C) Environment Act, 1986

D) Biodiversity Act, 2002

Answer: C – Explanation: The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Under these rules every State must set up a State Wetlands Authority.

4. Ramsar sites whose ecological character is under threat are placed on which register?

A) Red List

B) Green List

C) Montreux Record

D) Heritage in Danger

Answer: C – Explanation: Montreux Record – in India, Keoladeo (Rajasthan) and Loktak (Manipur). Red List – IUCN; 'in Danger' list – UNESCO.

5. Which was Tamil Nadu's first Ramsar site, designated in 2002?

A) Vedanthangal

B) Pallikaranai

C) Gulf of Mannar

D) Point Calimere

Answer: D – Explanation: Point Calimere (Kodiyakkarai) Wildlife & Bird Sanctuary, Nagapattinam district. Tamil Nadu has the most Ramsar sites in India.

Sources: The Times of India, Mumbai (11–12 Nov 2026); Ramsar Sites Information Service (rsis.ramsar.org); MoEFCC – Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.