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3 more wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites

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Context:

India adds 3 more wetlands to the list of **Ramsar sites** on the eve of Independence Day 2024

With this addition, the tally of **Ramsar sites touches to 85** covering **an area of 1358068 ha in the country**.

Three new sites included are

1. **Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary**, Tamilnadu
2. **Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary** in Tamil Nadand
3. **Tawa Reservoir** in Madhya Pradesh.

The country has added **59 new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites during 2014-2024**

vThese new designated sites are a testament to the significant policy push from the Ministry for wetlands conservation and management in the country.

1. Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary:

The Nanjarayan lake a large shallow wetland situated along the north-eastern region of Uthukuli Taluk of Tiruppur District in Tamil Nadu.

The wetlands in this region depend mainly on weather conditions, especially on heavy rain water flow from Nallar drainage.

Area: 125.865 Ha

The lake got its name from the fact that **it was repaired and restored by King Nanjarayan** who was ruling the region many centuries ago.

About **191 species of birds, 87 species of butterflies, 7 species of amphibians, 21 species of reptiles, 11 species of small mammals and 77 species of plants** have been recorded in and around the lake.

The **site acts as feeding and nesting habitat for resident bird species, migratory birds** use this lake as their feeding ground during the migratory season

The lake also serves as **important water source for agricultural purpose** in the region.

The lake plays **vital role in ground water recharge**.

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The lake is announced as *17th bird sanctuary of state of Tamil Nadu* owing to its rich avifaunal diversity.

The local community has already formed strong association in protecting the lake and its habitat.

The forest department in collaboration with the local community manages the lake on sustainable basis.

2. The Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary:

It is a *brackish shallow lake* located on the *Coromandel Coast in Villupuram district*, North of Pondicherry.

The lake is *connected to the Bay of Bengal by the brackish Uppukalli creek and the Edayanthitt Estuary*.

Kazhuveli is one of the significant and biodiversity rich wetlands.

The **lake is one of the largest wetlands in peninsular India**.

The lake can be divided into three parts based on the water features viz.,

1the **estuarine part** with brackish water,

2the **Uppukali creek** feeding the sea water and

3the **Kazuveli basin** with fresh water.

Area: 5151.6 ha

It was declared as the 16th bird sanctuary in Tamil Nadin the year 2021.

The Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary lies in the *Central Asian Flyway* and is an important stopover site for migratory species of birds and breeding ground for resident species of birds, breeding ground for fish and serves as a major recharge source for the aquifers.

In areas of brackish water highly degraded *mangrove patches* containing *Avicennia* species are found

In the earlier years, this area was reportedly harbouring Tropical Dry Evergreen Forests

In this area, *reed (Typhaangustata) is found in several hundred hectares*.

3.The Tawa Reservoir:

It has been constructed at the *confluence of the Tawa and Denwa rivers*.

River *Malani, Sonbhadra*, and *Nagdwari* are the *major tributaries of Tawa reservoir*.

Tawa River, *a left bank tributary originates from Mahadeo hills in Chhindwara district*, flows through Betul district and *joins river Narmada in Narmadapuram district*.

It is the *longest tributary of river Narmada (172 Km)*.

Tawa *Reservoir is situated near Itarsi town*.

The reservoir was built mainly for irrigation purpose.

Although later on it is also being used for power generation and aquaculture.

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It comes under the administrative control of Forest department of *district Narmadapuram*.

The reservoir is *located inside the Satpura Tiger Reserve* and *forms the western boundary of the Satpura National Park and Bori Wildlife Sanctuary*.

Reservoir is *important for aquatic flora and fauna* especially birds and wild animals.

Many *rare and endangered species of plants, reptiles and insects are found here*.

It is an important habitat for many local and migratory birds.

It is *the largest protected area in the state Madhya Pradesh*

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

- ❖ The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is *an international treaty for “the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands”*. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands.
- ❖ It is *named after the city of Ramsar in Iran* where it was *signed on 2nd of February 1971*.
- ❖ *The 2nd of February each year is World Wetlands Day*.
- ❖ The number of parties to the convention (COP) is 172.
- ❖ At the centre of the Ramsar philosophy is the *“wise use” of wetlands*.
- ❖ Wise use: maintenance of ecological character within the context of sustainable development.

Ramsar Site

When a country accedes to the Convention, it must *designate at least one wetland as a Wetland of International Importance*.

The *inclusion of a “Ramsar Site”* in the List embodies *the government’s commitment to take the steps necessary to ensure that its ecological character is maintained*.

The *world’s first Site was the Cobourg Peninsula in Australia*, designated in **1974**.

- *The countries with the most Ramsar Sites are the United Kingdom with 175 and Mexico with 142*.
- *Bolivia has the largest area under Ramsar protection*.