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India adds 10 more wetlands designated as Ramsar sites to make total 64 sites

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What's in News?

India adds 10 more wetlands designated as Ramsar sites to make **total 64 sites** covering an area of 12,50,361 ha in the country. The 10 new sites include: Six (6) sites in Tamil Nadu and One (1) each in Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

Wetlands:

The Ramsar Convention definition for wetlands includes marshes, floodplains, rivers and lakes, mangroves, coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than 6 metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.

Termed '**kidneys of landscape**', wetlands contribute to water purification, water regulation, biodiversity, aesthetics and recreation, according to the United Nations.

Wetlands in India:

A total of 757,060 wetlands have been mapped in the country.

The total wetland area estimated is 15.26 million hectares, which is around 4.63% of the geographical area of the country (National Wetlands Atlas - ISRO)

The 2011 edition of the National Wetlands Atlas of India classified India's wetlands into 19 categories.

Common ones include river, stream, reservoir, barrage, intertidal, mud-flat and natural lake; the more unique among them are lagoon, mangrove, coral, riverine and high-altitude lake

Wetlands are regulated under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017

India has maximum wetlands in South Asia - 7.7 lakh - covering the country's 4.6 per cent geographical area, according to a report of NGO Wetland International.

Ramsar Convention:

The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands, recognizing the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value

This convention was adopted on **February 2, 1971** in Ramsar, Iran and came into force in 1975.

Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to the treaty to become "Contracting Parties".

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February 2 is observed as **World Wetlands Day** every year.

Ramsar Site designation is for “Wetlands of International Importance”.

Wetlands can be designated to the Ramsar List under any (one or more) of the nine criteria that ranges from uniqueness of the site to those based on species and ecological communities supported.

Globally, there are over 2,300 Ramsar sites around the world, covering over 2.1 million sq km.

Importance of Wetlands:

Providers of all water-related ecosystem services:

They regulate water quantity, groundwater recharge, and can contribute to regulating floods and the impacts of storms.

Wetlands also help in erosion control and sediment transport, thereby contributing to land formation and increasing resilience to storms.

All these ecosystem services improve water security, including security from natural hazards and climate change adaptation.

Productive areas for plant life, animals and wetland agriculture:

Compared to many other ecosystems, wetlands are one of the most productive habitats in the world.

With greater species diversity nutrient recycling and niche specialization than most other ecosystems.

Major habitat:

Wetlands are major habitat for most of the world’s waterbirds and key habitat for migratory species.

Almost all of the world’s waterbirds use wetlands as feeding and breeding grounds.

Migratory waterbirds use wetlands throughout their range which can sometimes literally be from pole to pole.

The feeding, breeding and stop-over areas across and between continents that migratory birds depend on requires coordinated wetlands conservation efforts among many nations.

Important source of food:

Well-managed rice paddy systems, for example, produce not only rice but also co-benefits from rice-associated biodiversity, such as highly nutritious food in the form of fish, molluscs and crustaceans.

Wetlands also support the multitude of biota that helps sustain rice productivity through supporting nutrient cycling and pest and disease regulation.

The entire production of inland capture fisheries and most coastal fisheries is derived from wetlands, as is most aquaculture production.

High Value:

Values of coastal and inland wetlands ecosystem services are typically higher than for other ecosystem types.

Wetland ecosystems can have some of the highest ecosystem service values compared to other ecosystems.

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This is due to the importance of clean water provision, natural hazards mitigation, for example mangrove forests and floodplains, and carbon storage, for example in peatlands, mangroves and tidal marshes.

A large proportion of the values reported for most types of wetlands come from their waterrelated services.

High recreational, historical, scientific, and cultural values:

Wetlands have played an important part in human development and are of significant religious, historical or archeological value to many cultures around the world.

They are also often inviting places for popular recreational activities including hiking, fishing, bird watching, photography and hunting.

Ramsar Sites in India: (The newly added sites are indicated in Blue in the picture below)

RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA

Sl. No.	Name of Site	State Location
1	Kolleru Lake	Andhra Pradesh
2	Deepor Beel	Assam
3	Kabartal Wetland	Bihar
4	Nanda Lake	Goa
5	Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary	Gujarat
6	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Gujarat
7	Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary	Gujarat
8	Wadhvana Wetland	Gujarat
9	Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary	Haryana
10	Sultanpur National Park	Haryana
11	Chandertal Wetland	Himachal Pradesh
12	Pong Dam Lake	Himachal Pradesh
13	Renuka Wetland	Himachal Pradesh
14	Wular Lake	Jammu & Kashmir
15	Hokera Wetland	Jammu and Kashmir
16	Surinsar-Mansar Lakes	Jammu and Kashmir
17	Tsomoriri Lake	Jammu and Kashmir
18	Ranganathittu BS	Karnataka
19	Asthmudi Wetland	Kerala
20	Sasthamkotta Lake	Kerala
21	Vembanad Kol Wetland	Kerala
22	Tso Kar Wetland Complex	Ladakh
23	Bhoj Wetlands	Madhya Pradesh
24	Sakhya Sagar	Madhya Pradesh
25	Sirpur wetland	Madhya Pradesh
26	Lonar Lake	Maharashtra
27	Nandur Madhameshwar	Maharashtra
28	Loktak Lake	Manipur
29	Pala Wetland	Mizoram
30	Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Orissa
31	Chilka Lake	Orissa
32	Satkosia Gorge	Orissa
33	Beas Conservation Reserve	Punjab
34	Harike Lake	Punjab
35	Kanjli Lake	Punjab
36	Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve	Punjab
37	Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	Punjab
38	Ropar Lake	Punjab
39	Keoladeo Ghana NP	Rajasthan
40	Sambhar Lake	Rajasthan
41	Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
42	Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest	Tamil Nadu
43	Karikili Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
44	Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
45	Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve	Tamil Nadu
46	Pichavaram Mangrove	Tamil Nadu
47	Vembannur Wetland Complex	Tamil Nadu
48	Vellode Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
49	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
50	Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
51	Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura
52	Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
53	Haiderpur Wetland	Uttar Pradesh
54	Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
55	Parvati Agra Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
56	Saman Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
57	Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
58	Sandi Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
59	Sarsai Nawar Jheel	Uttar Pradesh
60	Sur Sarovar	Uttar Pradesh
61	Upper Ganga River(Brijghat to Narora Stretch)	Uttar Pradesh
62	Asan Conservation Reserve	Uttarakhand
63	East Kolkata Wetlands	West Bengal
64	Sunderbans Wetland	West Bengal

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