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New Wetlands to Ramsar List

Published On: 31-01-2026

In News: The **Union Environment Minister** announced the addition of **Patna Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh)** and **Chhari-Dhand Wetland Reserve (Gujarat)** to India's **Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance**, bringing the total count to **98 sites**.

1. Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah, UP)

- **Established:** 1991
- **Significance:** Smallest bird sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh
- **Habitat Type:** Freshwater wetland
- **Key Fauna:**
 - Aquatic birds such as **Lesser Whistling-Duck, Graylag Goose, Comb Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail**
- **Conservation Importance:** Protects migratory and resident aquatic bird species and supports wetland biodiversity in inland UP.

2. Chhari-Dhand Wetland Reserve (Kutch, Gujarat)

- **Location:** Edge of arid **Banni grasslands** and **marshy salt flats** of the **Rann of Kutch**
- **Meaning of Name:**
 - *Chhari* = salty
 - *Dhand* = shallow wetlands
- **Habitat Type:** Seasonal salt marshes and shallow wetlands
- **Key Fauna:**
 - Endangered species including **Dalmatian Pelican, Oriental Darter, Black-necked Stork, Indian Skimmer**
- **Unique Feature:** Famous for "**Chir Batti**" or ghost lights — an unexplained glowing phenomenon observed on dark nights across the Banni grasslands.
- **Conservation Importance:** Supports migratory birds and maintains ecological balance in the arid-semi-arid landscape of western India.

Significance of Ramsar Designation

1Recognises **wetlands of international importance** for ecology, biodiversity, and hydrology.

2Promotes **sustainable management**, protection of **habitat for migratory and endangered species**.

3Strengthens India's **commitments under the Ramsar Convention (1971)**, supporting **wetland conservation and wise use**.

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