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Patna Bird Sanctuary & Chhari-Dhand Added to India's Ramsar Sites List

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Patna Bird Sanctuary in Etah district of Uttar Pradesh and Chhari-Dhand in Kutch district, Gujarat were officially included in India's Ramsar Sites list (Wetlands of International Importance) on January 31, 2026, ahead of World Wetlands Day (observed on February 2).

Significance of the move:

With these additions, India now has 98 Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention, reflecting the nation's strengthened commitment to wetland conservation.

Ramsar designation helps internationally recognise wetlands for biodiversity protection, sustainable management, and ecosystem services.

About the Ramsar Convention:

It is an international treaty for wetland conservation signed in Ramsar, Iran (1971).

India became a signatory on February 1, 1982 and is one of the Contracting Parties to the convention.

Patna Bird Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh)

Located in Etah district of Uttar Pradesh.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: 044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833

The sanctuary spans freshwater marshes, woodlands and grasslands, forming a rich mosaic of habitats.

It supports 178 bird species and 252 plant species, including migratory waterfowl.

Recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife International due to its role as a critical habitat, especially in winter.

Besides birds, it supports species like broad-snouted crocodile (regionally vulnerable), nilgai, jackal, jungle cat, and monitor lizard.

It contributes to local eco-tourism and religious visitation, adding socio-economic value.

Chhari-Dhand (Gujarat)

A seasonal saline wetland located between the Banni grasslands and salt flats of Kutch.

Floods during monsoons, supporting a range of aquatic vegetation and rich biodiversity.

This wetland is vital for waterfowl wintering, hosting species such as the sociable lapwing, common pochard, and up to ~30,000 common cranes annually.

Vegetation includes Indian gum tragacanth and the critically endangered Indian bdellium-tree.

Like Patna Bird Sanctuary, it faces environmental threats from invasive species and human disturbances, with ongoing restoration and monitoring efforts.

India's Ramsar Story

Total Ramsar Sites (2026): 98 — significant growth from 26 sites in 2014 (? 276% increase).

Ramsar sites help safeguard wetlands that are ecologically important for biodiversity, water regulation, climate resilience, and migratory species corridors.

World Wetlands Day: Celebrated annually on February 2 to raise awareness about wetland conservation globally.