



Current Affairs

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Wetlands in India

In India, wetlands are spread over 1,52,600 square kilometres (sq km) which is 4.63 % of the total geographical area of the country.

Of the 1,52,600 sq km, inland-natural wetlands account for 43.4% and coastal-natural wetlands 24.3%.

India has 19 types of wetlands. In state-wise distribution of wetlands, Gujarat is at the top with 34,700 sq km (17.56% of total geographical area of the state), or 22.7% of total wetlands areas of the country.

It is followed by Andhra Pradesh (14,500 sq km), Uttar Pradesh (12,400 sq km) and West Bengal (11,100 sq km).

Wetlands in India

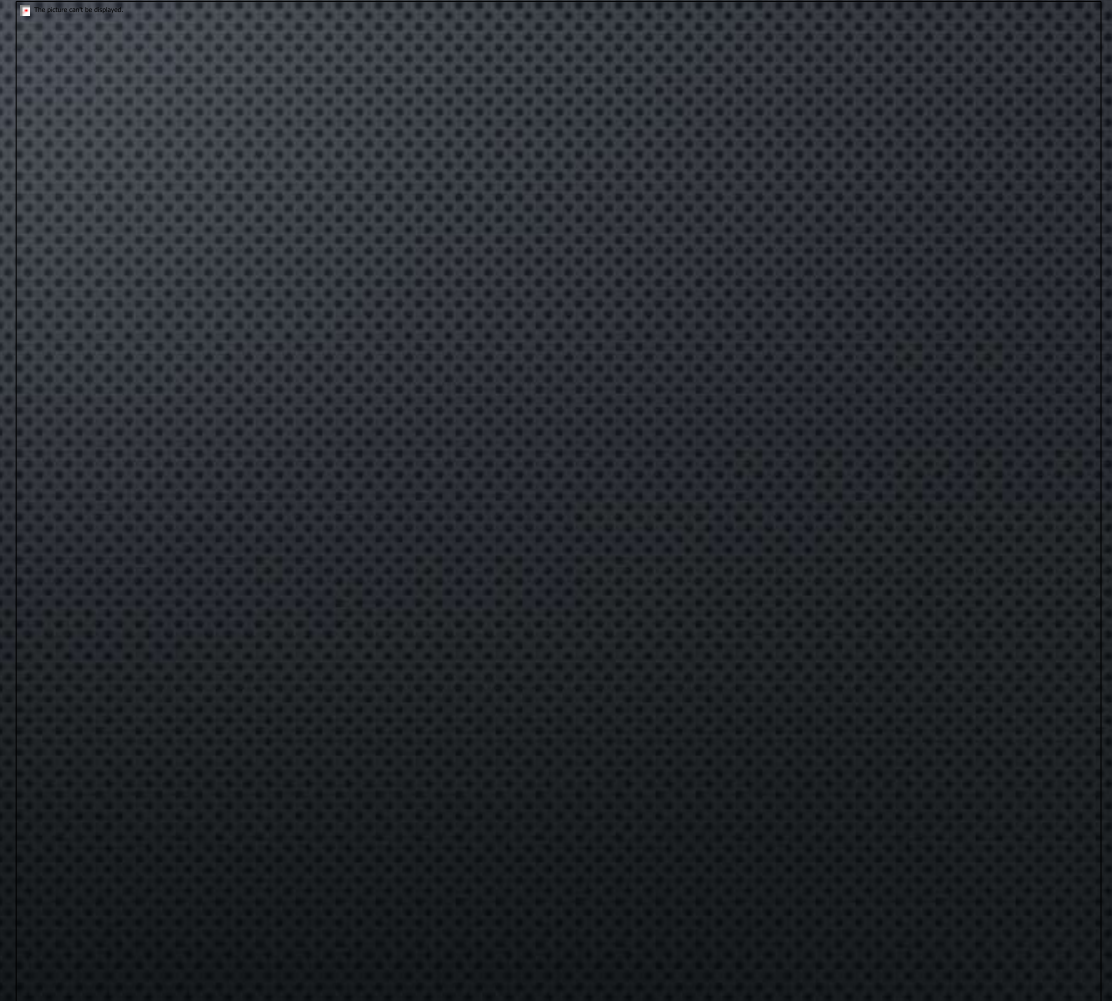


This year, India has increased its tally of Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance) to 89 by designating 4 more wetlands as Ramsar sites till March 2025.

Recently added 14 Ramsar Sites

- 1. Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu**
- 2. Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, Tamil Nadu**
- 3. Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Karnataka**
- 4. Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, Karnataka**
- 5. Aghanashini Estuary, Karnataka**
- 6. Nagi Bird Sanctuaries, Bihar**
- 7. Nakti Bird Sanctuaries, Bihar**

- 1. Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)**
- 2. Therthangal Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)**
- 3. Khecheopalri Wetland (Sikkim)**
- 4. Udhwa Lake (Jharkhand)**



Year wise designation of 85 Ramsar sites

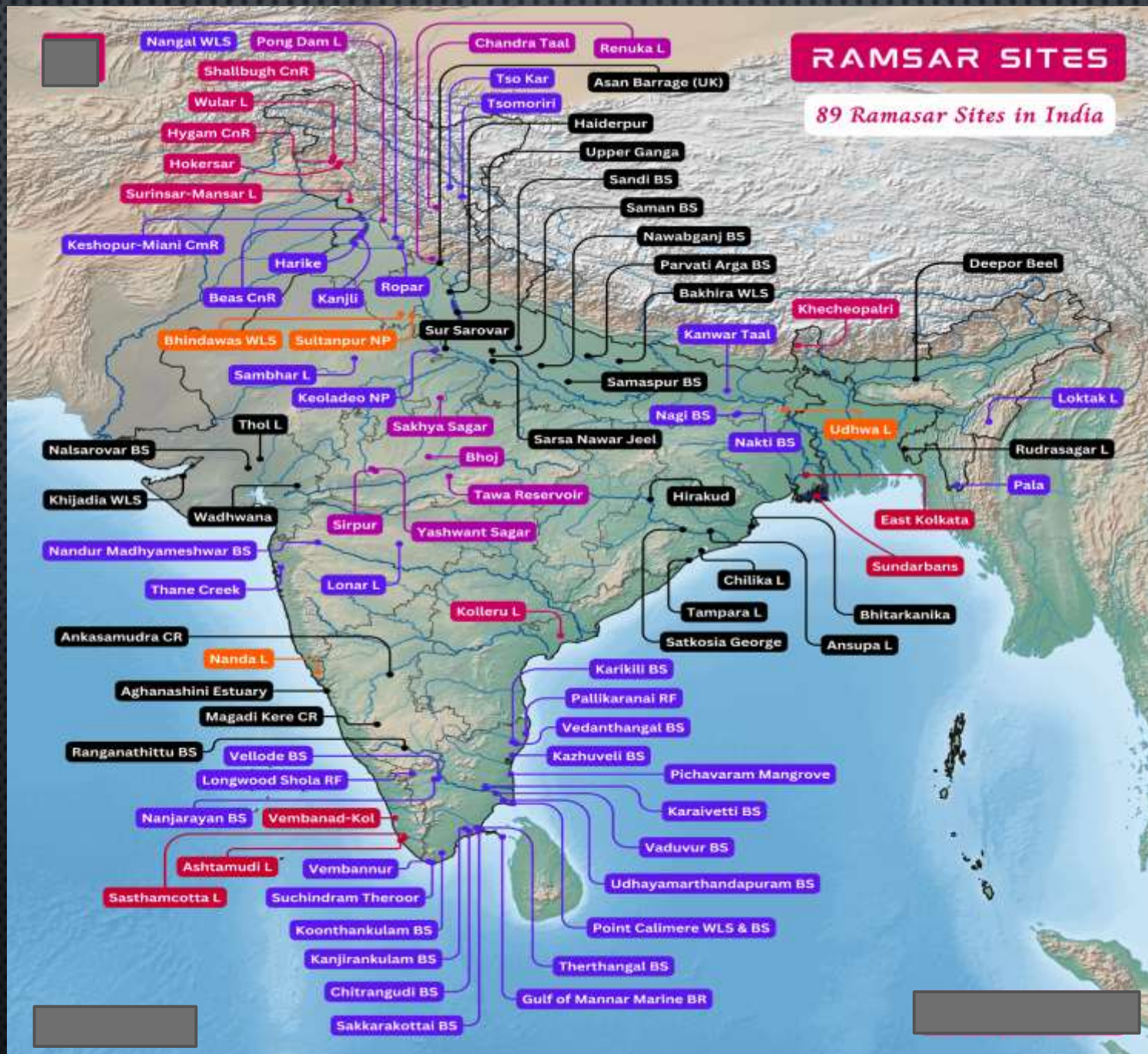
S. No.	Year of Designation	No of site designated (As per date of designation)	Sites designated upto 2013 and after 2014 to till date	Area covered in Ha
1	1981	2	26 (1981 to 2013)	633871
2	1990	4		
3	2002	13		
4	2005	6		
5	2012	1		
6	2019	11	59 (2014 to 2024)	724196.757
7	2020	5		
8	2021	14		
9	2022	19		
10	2024	10		
	Total	85	85	1358067.757

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80 Ramsar Sites in India
(as of Feb 2024)

5 New Additions in Feb 2024



Largest Ramsar Sites in India

Ramsar Site		State	Area (km ²)
1	Sundarban Wetland	West Bengal	4,230
2	Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	1,513
3	Vembanad-Kol Wetland	Kerala	1,512.5
4	Chilika Lake	Odisha	1,165
5	Satkosia Gorge	Odisha	981.97
6	Kolleru Lake	Andhra Pradesh	901

Smallest Ramsar Sites in India

1	Renuka Lake	Himachal Pradesh	0.2
2	Vembannur Wetland Complex	Tamil Nadu	0.2
3	Vedanthangal BS	Tamil Nadu	0.4
4	Nanda Lake	Goa	0.42
5	Udhayamarthandapuram BS	Tamil Nadu	0.44



Oldest Ramsar Sites in India

1	Chilka Lake – 1981
2	Keoladeo Ghana NP – 1981



State-wise Number of Ramsar Sites

Rank	State	No. of Ramsar Sites
1	Tamil Nadu	18
2	Uttar Pradesh	10
3	Odisha	6
4	Punjab	6
5	UT of JK	5

State-wise Area of Ramsar Sites

Rank	State	Area Under Ramsar Sites (km ²)
1	West Bengal	4,355
2	Odisha	3,456
3	Tamil Nadu	2,469
4	Kerala	2,130
5	Andhra Pradesh	901

UPSC Preliminary PYQs

“If rainforests and tropical forests are the lungs of the Earth, then surely wetlands function as its kidneys.” Which one of the following functions of wetlands best reflects the above statement? (2022)

- a) The water cycle in wetlands involves surface runoff, subsoil percolation and evaporation.
- b) Algae form the nutrient base upon which fish, crustaceans, molluscs, birds, reptiles and mammals thrive.
- c) Wetlands play a vital role in maintaining sedimentation balance and Soil stabilization.
- d) Aquatic plants absorb heavy metals and excess nutrients.

Ans: (d)

With reference to a conservation organization called Wetlands International', which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is an intergovernmental organization formed by the countries which are signatories to Ramsar Convention.
2. It works at the field level to develop and mobilize knowledge, and use the practical experience to advocate for better policies.

Select the correct answer using the code given below: (2014)

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Consider the following statements:

1. Under the Ramsar Convention, it is mandatory on the part of the Government of India to protect and conserve all the wetlands in the territory of India.
2. The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010 were framed by the Government of India based on the recommendation of Ramsar Convention.
3. The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010 also encompass the drainage area or catchment regions of the wetlands as determined by the authority.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

If a wetland of international importance is brought under the 'Montreux Record', what does it imply? (2014)

1. Changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur in the wetland as a result of human interference.
2. The country in which the wetland is located should enact a law to prohibit any human activity within five kilometres from the edge of the wetland
3. The survival of the wetland depends on the cultural practices and traditions of certain communities living in its vicinity, and therefore the cultural diversity therein should not be destroyed
4. It is given the status of 'World Heritage Site'

Ans: (a)

UPSC Mains PYQs

Comment on the National Wetland Conservation Programme initiated by the Government of India and name a few India's wetlands of international importance included in the Ramsar Sites. (2023)

What is wetland? Explain the Ramsar concept of 'wise use' in the context of wetland conservation. Cite two examples of Ramsar sites from India. (2018)



Good Luck !!!