

RAMSAR SITES IN THE NEWS

About Ramsar Convention/Convention on Wetlands

- **Established in 1971** in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
- **The Convention encourages** the designation of "Ramsar sites," which are wetlands of international importance due to their unique ecological characteristics.
- **Members:** 172 signatory countries.
- It is a **permanent tag** and only in exceptional circumstances, due to extreme anthropogenic factors, are the Ramsar sites put in the **Montreux record** until the time they are restored to their existing level."

Ramsar and India

- **India joined it in 1982**, initially designating the Chilika Lake in Orissa and Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan.
- **Total sites:** 85 (As of Nov 2024).
- **Tamil Nadu harbours a maximum** number of Ramsar Sites (**18 sites**) followed by **Uttar Pradesh (10 sites)**. (As of Nov 2024)

Newly added Ramsar sites in 2024

Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary

- **Location:** Tamil Nadu, on the banks of the Noyyal River.
- Designated as a **Bird Sanctuary in 2022**.
- **Bird species:** Eurasian coot, spot-billed duck, Indian darter, and Indian cormorant.

Kazhuveli Sanctuary

- **Location:** Tamil Nadu, one of the largest brackish water wetlands.
- **Declared as a Bird Sanctuary** in 2021.
- **Connected to the Bay of Bengal** by the brackish Uppukalli Creek and the Edayanthittu Estuary.

- **Species:** Globally endangered species, like the black-headed ibis and greater flamingo.
- **Lies in the** Central Asian Flyway.
- **Stopover for migratory birds** along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.

Tawa Reservoir

- **Location:** Madhya Pradesh.
- Massive wintering ground for migratory birds.
- Constructed at the **confluence of the Tawa and Denwa rivers**.
- **Major tributaries of Tawa reservoir:** River Malani, Sonbhadra, and Nagdwari.
- **Located inside the Satpura Tiger Reserve** and forms the western boundary of the Satpura National Park and Bori Wildlife Sanctuary.

About Tawa River:

- **Left bank tributary originates** from Mahadeo hills and joins river Narmada.
- **Longest tributary** of river Narmada.

Nagi Bird Sanctuary

- **Location:** Jamui District of Bihar.
- Designated as a **Bird Sanctuary in 1984**.
- Hosts one of the **largest congregations of bar-headed goose** on the Indo-Gangetic plain.

Value addition

- **Kanwar Lake** was designated as **Bihar's first Ramsar Site in 2020**.

Nakti Bird Sanctuary (man-made wetland)

- **Location:** Jamui District of Bihar.
- **Species:** Endangered Indian elephant (*Elephas maximus indicus*) and a vulnerable native catfish.
- One of the **largest congregations of red-crested pochard** on the Indo-Gangetic plain.

Longwood Shola reserve forest

- **Location:** Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu.
- **Adjacent to** the eastern slopes of the Nilgiris and is surrounded by tea plantations.
- **Forest type:** Classified as Southern Montane Wet Temperate Forest.
- **Flora:**
 - **Endangered species such as** Psychotria nilgiriensis, Actinodaphne bourneae, and Cinnamomum wightii are found in the Site.
 - **Vulnerable species like** Cayratia pedata and Syzygium densiflorum.
- **Fauna:**
 - **Key conservation area of endangered** Black-chinned Nilgiri Laughing thrush, Nilgiri Blue Robin, and vulnerable Nilgiri Wood-pigeon.
 - It is **home to 14 out of 26 species that are endemic** to the Western Ghats region.
 - **Several species are classified under the IUCN red list including,** Nilgiri Laughingthrush, Nilgiri Blue Robin, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Nilgiri WoodPigeon, Kashmir Flycatcher, Nilgiri Pipit, and Rufous-bellied Eagle.
- **Global international designation:** UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
- **Derived its name** from the Tamil word, "Solai", which means a 'tropical rain forest'.
- One of the **Important Bird Areas (IBA's) of Tamil Nadu** and qualifies for **two criteria** of the IBA selection process – **A1 (Threatened species)** and **A2 (Endemic Bird Area 123: Western Ghats).**

Sholas/ Shola Forest

- **Sholas are found in** the upper reaches of the Nilgiris, Anamalais, Palni hills, Kalakadu, Mundanthurai, and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.
- They **occur only in the valleys** where the occurrence of fog and mist is low.

Karavetti Bird Sanctuary

- **Location:** Ariyalur District, Tamil Nadu.
- **Notified as a Sanctuary** in 1977.
- **One of the largest inland wetlands** of Tamil Nadu.
- It is basically an **irrigation tank** that receives water from the **Mettur dam**.
- Lies in the Central Asian Flyway and it is one of the

freshwater feeding grounds for migratory water birds.

- **Crop yields are enhanced by guano** (bird excreta) produced by the migratory and resident birds.
- **Flora:**
- **Fauna:**
 - **Threatened species like** Common Pochard, River Tern, and Flap-shelled Turtle.
 - **Support 1% of the population** of Black-headed Ibis and Oriental Darters.
 - Endangered Bar Headed Goose (**IUCN Status: 'Least Concern'**)- visitor Bird.

Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve

- **Location:** Vijayanagara District, Karnataka
- **Notified in 2017.**
- On the **banks of the Tungabhadra Dam** backwater area.
- **First bird conservation reserve** in the **North Karnataka.**
- **Fauna:** Important visiting birds include Greater Flamingo, Painted Stork, Spotted Pelican, Comb Duck, Egrets, Cormorants, Ibis, Oriental Darter, Grebes, Spot-billed duck, Whistling duck, etc.
 - Around **11 species of birds** found here were listed in the **IUCN Red List.**
 - **Supports more than 1% of the biogeographic population** of Painted Stork and Black-headed Ibis.
- **Flora: Gum Arabic trees** (Vachellia nilotica) grow in the lake.

Aghanashini Estuary

- **Location:** Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka
- **Formed at the confluence of the Aghanashini River** with the Arabian Sea.
- **The brackish water of the Estuary** provides diverse ecosystem services.
- **Flora: Mangroves** bordering the estuary help to protect the shores against storms and cyclones.
- **Fauna:** Supports **over 1% of the biogeographic population of 15 waterbird species** (which includes river tern, oriental darter, lesser black-backed gull, woolly-necked stork, Eurasian oystercatcher, and others).
- Farmers practice traditional farming to grow **salt-tolerant rice called "kagga"**, which is one of the specialties of the region.

Aghanashini River (destroyer of sins):

- **Aghanashini River in Karnataka** originates in the Western Ghats and flows westward towards the Arabian Sea.
- **The length of the river** is only 124 km.
- **Meets the sea at Aghanashini village** of Kumta taluk.
- **No dams** and notable establishments or major townships are there along its banks.
- **Flowing in the same course** for thousands of years.

Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve

- **Location:** Gadag district, Karnataka
- It is a **human-made wetland** constructed to store rainwater.
- **Fauna:** Two vulnerable species, namely the Common pochard and River tern, and four near-threatened species, namely the Oriental Darter, Black-headed Ibis, Woolly-necked Stork, and Painted Stork.
- **One of the largest wintering grounds** for the **Bar-headed goose** (*Anser indicus*) in Southern India.
- Designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA).
- Karnataka has only four Ramsar sites. **Ranghattitu Bird Sanctuary** was the first to receive this status in 2022.

VALUE ADDITION**Ramsar Sites Criteria****A wetland should be considered internationally important if it:****Criterion 1:**

- **Contains a representative, rare, or unique example** of a natural or near-natural wetland type found within the appropriate biogeographic region.

Criterion 2:

- **Supports** vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered species or threatened ecological communities.

Criterion 3:

- **Supports populations of plant and/or animal species** that are important for maintaining the biological diversity of a particular biogeographic region.

Criterion 4:

- **Supports plant and/or animal species** at a **critical stage in their life cycles**, or provides refuge during adverse conditions.

A wetland should be considered internationally important if it:**Criterion 5:**

- Regularly supports **20,000 or more waterbirds**.

Criterion 6:

- Regularly **supports 1% of the individuals in a population** of one species or subspecies of waterbird.

Criterion 7:

- **Supports a significant proportion of indigenous fish subspecies**, species or families, life-history stages, species interactions, and/or populations that are representative of wetland benefits and/or values and thereby contribute to global biological diversity.

Criterion 8:

- **An important source of food for fishes**, spawning ground, nursery, and/or migration path on which fish stocks, either within the wetland or elsewhere, depend.

Criterion 9:

- **Supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species** or subspecies of wetland-dependent nonavian animal species.

Wetlands in India

- **Covers 4.63 percent** of the total geographical area of the country.
- India has **19 types** of wetlands.
- **State-wise distribution-** Gujarat is at the top, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.
- **Inland-natural wetlands** account for **43.4%** and **coastal-natural wetlands 24.3%**.

About World Wetlands Day

Observed on 2nd February to commemorate the signing of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance in 1971**.

Wetlands International

- Established its headquarters in the Netherlands in **1996**.
- It is the **only global not-for-profit organisation** dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wetlands.

About Amrit Dharohar initiative

- **Launched by** MoEF&CC in 2023.
- **To promote** the unique conservation values of the Ramsar Sites in the country while generating employment opportunities and supporting local livelihoods.

State-wise Ramsar Sites of India

State	Wetland
Andhra Pradesh	Kolleru Lake
Assam	Deepor Beel
Bihar	- Kabartal Wetland - Nagi Bird Sanctuary - Nakti Bird Sanctuary
Gujarat	- Nalsarovar - Wadhvana Wetland - Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary - Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary
Goa	Nanda Lake
Haryana	- Sultanpur National Park - Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary
Himachal Pradesh	- Pong Dam Lake - Chandertal Wetland - Renuka Wetland
Jammu and Kashmir	- Wular Lake - Surinsar-Mansar Lakes - Hokera Wetland - Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve - Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve
Karnataka	- Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary - Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve - Aghanashini Estuary - Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve
Kerala	- Asthamudi Wetland - Sasthamkotta Lake - VembanadKol Wetland
Ladakh	- Tso Kar Wetland Complex - Tsomoriri Lake

Madhya Pradesh	- Bhoj Wetlands - Sirpur Wetland - Sakhya Sagar - Yashwant Sagar - Tawa Reservoir
Maharashtra	- Nandur Madhameshwar - Lonar Lake - Thane Creek
Manipur	Loktak Lake
Mizoram	Pala Wetland
Odisha	- Chilka Lake - Bhitarkanika Mangroves - Satkosia Gorge - Tampara Lake - Hirakud Reservoir - Ansupa Lake
Punjab	- Harike Lake - Kanjli Lake - Ropar Lake - Beas Conservation Reserve - Keshopur - Miani Community Reserve - Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary
Rajasthan	Keoladeo Ghana National Park Sambhar Lake
Tamil Nadu	- Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary - Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary - Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary - Karikili Bird Sanctuary - Pichavaram Mangrove - Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest - Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve - Vembannur Wetland Complex - Vellode Bird Sanctuary - Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary - Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary - Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex - Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary - Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary - Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary - Longwood Shola Reserve Forest

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary - Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary
Tripura	Rudrasagar Lake
Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upper Ganga River - Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary - Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary - Saman Bird Sanctuary - Samaspur Bird Sanctuary - Sandi Bird Sanctuary - Sarsai NawarJheel - Sur Sarovar - Haiderpur Wetland - Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary
Uttarakhand	Asan Conservation Reserve
West Bengal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Calcutta Wetlands - Sunderbans Wetland.