

RAMSAR WETLANDS SITES

A Ramsar Site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance. These wetlands are protected under strict guidelines of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands,

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, also known as the Convention on Wetlands, is an intergovernmental treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

- The convention, signed in 1971 by UNESCO in the Iranian city of Ramsar, is one of the oldest inter-governmental accords for preserving the ecological character of wetlands.
- Over 170 countries are now party to the Ramsar Convention.
- There are over 2,400 Ramsar Sites around the world covering over 2.5 million square kilometres.



What are wetlands?

Wetlands are referred to as “Kidneys of the Earth”

- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands defines wetlands as “areas of marsh, fen, peat land or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed 6 meters.”
- The Indian government’s definition as per The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 excludes river channels, paddy fields and other areas where commercial activity takes place.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service has adopted the definition of wetland as, “lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water.”
- For the purposes of this classification wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes:
 - at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes
 - the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil
 - the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.
- The theme of this year’s World Wetlands Day is “Wetlands Action for People and Nature”.

Wetlands provide a wide range of important resources and ecosystem services such as

- ❖ food
- ❖ water
- ❖ fiber
- ❖ groundwater recharge
- ❖ water purification
- ❖ flood moderation
- ❖ erosion control
- ❖ climate regulation

Five major wetland types are generally recognized:

- ✓ **Marine** - Coastal wetlands including coastal lagoons, rocky shores, and coral reefs.
- ✓ **Estuarine** - Including deltas, tidal marshes, and mangrove swamps.
- ✓ **Lacustrine** - Wetlands associated with lakes.
- ✓ **Riverine** - Wetlands along rivers and streams.
- ✓ **Palustrine** - Meaning “marshy” - marshes, swamps and bogs.

- ✓ **Human-made wetlands** - such as fish and shrimp ponds, farm ponds, irrigated agricultural land, saltpans, reservoirs, gravel pits, sewage farms and canals.

status of wetlands in India

Globally, wetlands cover 6.4% of the geographical area of the world.

- ✓ In India, according to the National Wetland Inventory and Assessment compiled by ISRO, wetlands are spread over 1,52,600 sq km which is 4.63 % of the total geographical area of the country.
- ✓ Of this, 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 (22.7% of total wetlands areas of the country), followed by Andhra, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Montreux Record

The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.

- It is a voluntary mechanism to highlight specific wetlands of international importance that are facing immediate challenges.
- It is maintained as part of the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance.
- At present Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan and Loktak Lake, Manipur are the two Indian sites listed under it.
- In 1993, Chilika Lake was also listed in Montreux Record due to problem of siltation but later it was removed from the list as the problem of siltation was tackled by Govt. of India.

significance of Ramsar listing

Under the Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017, states can identify wetlands of importance.

- ✓ Simultaneously, state forest departments can also designate wetlands of importance under the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan.
- ✓ Together, these can provide legal protection to these sites from the perspective of birds.
- ✓ Ramsar secretariat designating a wetland as wetland of global importance may not lead to any extra funding by the global body but it is like an accreditation.
- ✓ A Ramsar tag makes it incumbent upon authority to strengthen the protection regime there and also creates defences against encroachment etc on wetlands.

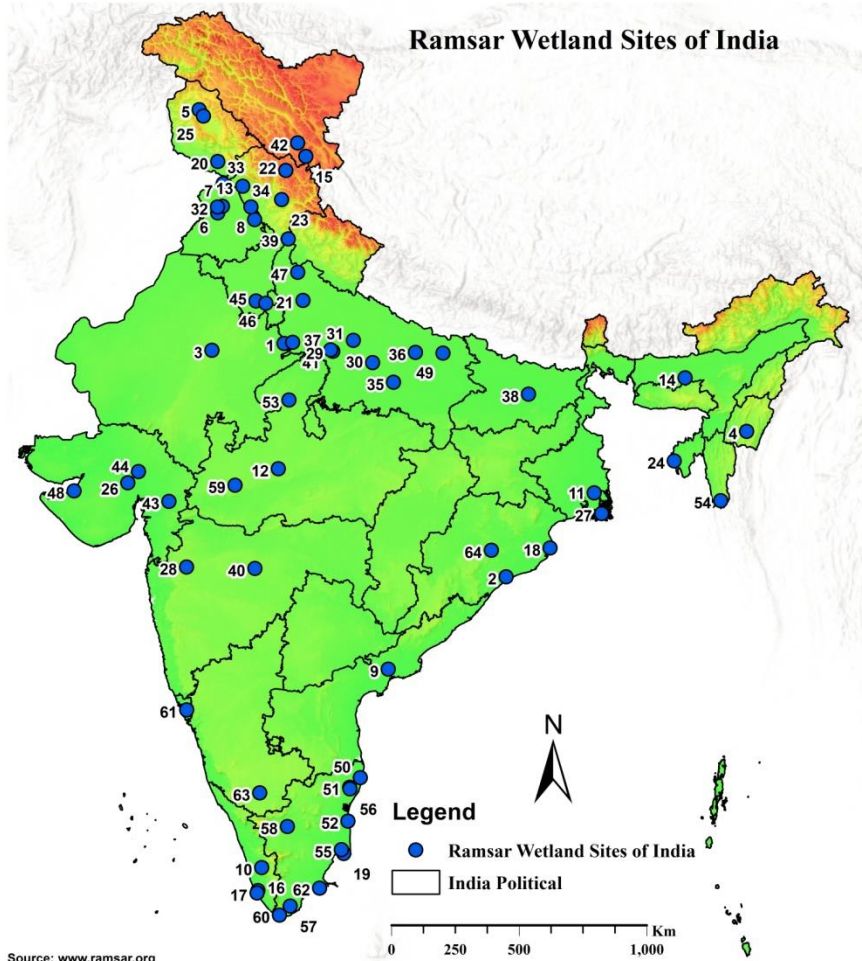
- ✓ Designating a wetland as a Ramsar site also means that it gets more public attention.

Global leaders

The countries with the most Ramsar Sites are the United Kingdom (175) and Mexico (142), as per the Ramsar List. Bolivia has the largest area with 148,000 sq km under the Convention protection. Canada, Chad, Congo and the Russian Federation have also each designated over 100,000 sq km.

The Ramsar Convention works with the collaboration of the following organizations:

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Birdlife International.
- International Water Management Institute (IWMI).
- Wetlands International.
- Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)
- WWF International



Source: www.ramsar.org

S.No	Site Name	Designation Date	Area (Sq. Km)
1	Kolleru National Park	10/1/1981	28.73
2	Chilika Lake	10/1/1981	1165
3	Sambhar Lake	3/23/1990	240
4	Loktak Lake	3/23/1990	266
5	Wular Lake	3/23/1990	189
6	Harke Lake	3/23/1990	41
7	Kanjli	1/22/2002	1.83
8	Ropar	1/22/2002	13.65
9	Kolleru Lake	8/19/2002	901
10	Vembanad-Kol Wetland	8/19/2002	1532.5
11	East Calcutta Wetlands	8/19/2002	125
12	Bhoj Wetland	8/19/2002	32.01
13	Pong Dam Lake	8/19/2002	156.62
14	Deepor Beel	8/19/2002	40
15	Tsomoriri	8/19/2002	120
16	Saxthamotta Lake	8/19/2002	3.78
17	Ashtamudi Wetland	8/19/2002	61.4
18	Bhitarkanka Mangroves	8/19/2002	650
19	Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	8/19/2002	385
20	Surinsar-Mansar Lakes	11/8/2005	3.5
21	Upper Ganga River	11/8/2005	265.9
22	Chandertal Wetland	11/8/2005	0.49
23	Renuka Wetland	11/8/2005	0.2
24	Rudrasagar Lake	11/8/2005	2.4
25	Hokera Wetland	11/8/2005	13.75
26	Nulsar Wetland	9/24/2012	120
27	Sundarban Wetland	1/30/2019	4230
28	Nandur Madhameshwar	6/21/2019	14.37
29	Sarsai Nawar Jheel	9/19/2019	1.6127
30	Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	9/19/2019	2.246
31	Sandi Bird Sanctuary	9/26/2019	3.0854
32	Beas Conservation Reserve	9/26/2019	64.2892
33	Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve	9/26/2019	3.439
34	Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	9/26/2019	1.16
35	Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	10/3/2019	7.99371
36	Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary	12/2/2019	7.22
37	Saman Bird Sanctuary	12/2/2019	5.263
38	Kabartal Wetland	7/21/2020	26.2
39	Asan Conservation Reserve	7/21/2020	4.444
40	Lonar Lake	7/22/2020	4.27
41	Sur Sarovar	8/21/2020	4.31
42	Tso Kar Wetland Complex	11/17/2020	95.77
43	Wadhvana Wetland	4/5/2021	6.3
44	Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary	4/5/2021	6.99
45	Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary	5/25/2021	4.12
46	Sultanpur National Park	5/25/2021	1.4252
47	Halderpur Wetland	4/13/2021	60.08
48	Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary	4/13/2021	5.11745
49	Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary	6/29/2021	28.94
50	Pallikarai Marsh Reserve Forest	4/8/2022	12.47537
51	Karikili Bird Sanctuary	4/8/2022	0.58442
52	Pichavaram Mangrove	4/8/2022	14.78642
53	Sakhya Sagar	1/7/2022	2.48
54	Pala Wetland	8/31/2021	18.5
55	Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary	4/8/2022	0.43767
56	Vedanthalang Bird Sanctuary	4/8/2022	0.40348
57	Koonthunkulam Bird Sanctuary	11/8/2021	0.7204
58	Velode Bird Sanctuary	4/8/2022	0.77185
59	Sirpur Wetland	1/7/2022	1.61
60	Vembanur Wetland Complex	4/8/2022	0.19746
61	Nanda Lake	6/8/2022	0.4201
62	Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve	4/8/2022	526.71876
63	Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary	2/15/2022	5.177
64	Satkosia Gorge	10/12/2021	981.9672


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 Wildlife Institute of India

RAMSAR WETLANDS SITES (As on August, 2022)

Sl. No.	Name of Site	State Location	Date of Declaration	Area (in Sq. km.)
1	Kolleru Lake	Andhra Pradesh	19.8.2002	901
2	Deepor Beel	Assam	19.8.2002	40
3	Kabartal Wetland	Bihar	21.07.2020	26.20
4	Nanda Lake	Goa	06.08.2022	0.42
5	Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary	Gujarat	13.04.2021	5.12

6	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Gujarat	24.09.2012	120
7	Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary	Gujarat	05.04.2021	6.99
8	Wadhvana Wetland	Gujarat	05.04.2021	6.30
9	Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary	Haryana	25.05.2021	4.12
10	Sultanpur National Park	Haryana	25.05.2021	1.425
11	Chandertal Wetland	Himachal Pradesh	8.11.2005	0.49
12	Pong Dam Lake	Himachal Pradesh	19.8.2002	156.62
13	Renuka Wetland	Himachal Pradesh	8.11.2005	0.2
14	Wular Lake	Jammu & Kashmir	23.3.1990	189
15	Hokera Wetland	Jammu and Kashmir	8.11.2005	13.75
16	Surinsar-Mansar Lakes	Jammu and Kashmir	8.11.2005	3.5
17	Tsomoriri Lake	Jammu and Kashmir	19.8.2002	120
18	Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary	Karnataka	15.02.2022	5.18
19	Asthamudi Wetland	Kerala	19.8.2002	614
20	Sasthamkotta Lake	Kerala	19.8.2002	3.73
21	Vembanad Kol Wetland	Kerala	19.8.2002	1512.5
22	Tso Kar Wetland Complex	Ladakh	17.11.2020	95.77
23	Bhoj Wetlands	Madhya Pradesh	19.8.2002	32.01
24	Sakhya Sagar	Madhya Pradesh	01.07.2022	2.48
25	Sirpur Wetland	Madhya Pradesh	01.07.2022	1.61
26	Lonar Lake	Maharashtra	22.7.2020	4.27
27	Nandur Madhameshwar	Maharashtra	21.6.2019	14.37
28	Loktak Lake	Manipur	23.3.1990	266
29	Pala Wetland	Mizoram	31.08.2021	18.5
30	Satkosia Gorge	Odisha	10.12.2021	981.97
31	Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Orissa	19.8.2002	650
32	Chilka Lake	Orissa	1.10.1981	1165
33	Beas Conservation Reserve	Punjab	26.9.2019	64.289
34	Harike Lake	Punjab	23.3.1990	41
35	Kanjli Lake	Punjab	22.1.2002	1.83
36	Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve	Punjab	26.9.2019	3.439
37	Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	Punjab	26.9.2019	1.16
38	Ropar Lake	Punjab	22.1.2002	13.65
39	Keoladeo Ghana NP	Rajasthan	1.10.1981	28.73
40	Sambhar Lake	Rajasthan	23.3.1990	240
41	Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	526.72
42	Karikili Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	0.584

43	Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	11.08.2021	0.72
44	Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	12.475
45	Pichavaram Mangrove	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	14.786
46	Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	19.8.2002	385
47	Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	0.44
48	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	0.40
49	Vellode Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	0.77
50	Vembannur Wetland Complex	Tamil Nadu	04.08.2022	0.20
51	Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura	8.11.2005	2.4
52	Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	29.06.2021	28.94
53	Haiderpur Wetland	Uttar Pradesh	8.12.2021	69.08
54	Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	19.9.2019	2.246
55	Parvati Agra Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2.12.2019	7.22
56	Saman Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2.12.2019	52.63
57	Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	3.10.2019	79.94
58	Sandi Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	26.9.2019	30.85
59	Sarsai Nawar Jheel	Uttar Pradesh	19.9.2019	16.13
60	Sur Sarovar	Uttar Pradesh	21.8.2020	4.31
61	Upper Ganga River (Brijghat to Narora Stretch)	Uttar Pradesh	8.11.2005	265.9
62	Asan Conservation Reserve	Uttarakhand	21.7.2020	4.444
63	East Kolkata Wetlands	West Bengal	19.8.2002	125
64	Sunderbans Wetland	West Bengal	30.1.2019	4230

(Source: Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India)