



RAMSAR SITES : INDIA

2025 updated

A state-wise compilation of all Ramsar Sites in India (updated till 2025), with key facts for quick recall. Includes exam-relevant highlights and analytical insights for Prelims & Mains.



What are wetlands?

Areas of marsh, fen, peatland 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 **six metres**.

The Ramsar Convention

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, officially known as *the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat*, was signed on **February 2, 1971**, in the Iranian city of Ramsar. It is the first modern global intergovernmental treaty focused on the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

- Ramsar Convention is the **only** intergovernmental treaty for wetlands of international importance.
- India is a Contracting Party (joined 1982).

Objectives

- To conserve and manage wetlands and their resources
- To promote the "wise use" of wetlands, defined as maintaining ecological character while allowing sustainable utilization
- To facilitate international cooperation on transboundary wetlands and shared wetland systems
- To recognize the ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational value of wetlands

India's Ramsar Sites

As of December 2025, India has 96 Ramsar Sites designated under the Convention, covering approximately 13.6 lakh hectares. This represents the **highest number of Ramsar Sites in Asia** and the **third-highest globally (after UK and Mexico)**

This growth reflects India's proactive wetland conservation efforts: India had only 26 Ramsar Sites in 2012, expanding to 96 by 2025—a net addition of 70 sites in 13 years.



STATE/UT	Ramsar Site	Year	Specific fact
JAMMU & KASHMIR	Wular Lake	1990	Largest freshwater lake of India; flood-moderating basin on River Jhelum.
	Surinsar-Mansar Lakes	2005	Twin lakes near Jammu; significant for tourism and religious values besides birdlife.
	Hokera Wetland	2005	Important waterfowl refuge in Kashmir valley facing eutrophication and siltation.
	Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve	2022	Freshwater wetland
	Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve	2022	Freshwater wetland
LADAKH	Tsomoriri Lake	2002	High-altitude brackish lake; breeding ground of bar-headed geese and black-necked crane .
	Tso Kar Wetland Complex	2020	Cold-desert saline lake complex; crucial staging site for Central Asian migratory birds.
HIMACHAL PRADESH	Pong Dam Lake	2002	Reservoir on Beas; major migratory waterfowl site in western Himalaya.
	Chandertal Wetland	2005	High-altitude Himalayan lake at ~4,300 m; oligotrophic, glacier-fed ecosystem.
	Renuka Wetland	2005	Smallest Ramsar site of India ; sacred lake associated with Renuka temple.
UTTARAKHAND	Asan Conservation Reserve	2020	Small reservoir on Yamuna-Tons confluence; important for ruddy shelduck and other migrants.
UTTAR PRADESH	Upper Ganga River	2005	First Ramsar site of UP; supports Ganga river dolphin.
	Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	2019	Small tank sanctuary
	Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary	2019	Twin lakes
	Saman Bird Sanctuary	2019	Seasonal wetland in Mainpuri famous for bar-headed geese.



UTTAR PRADESH	Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	2019	Bird sanctuary
	Sandi Bird Sanctuary	2019	Tank sanctuary
	Sarsai Nawar Jheel	2019	Freshwater lake
	Sur Sarovar (Keetham Lake)	2020	important for sarus crane and bar-headed geese.
	Haiderpur Wetland	2021	Wetland/ marsh
	Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary	2021	Wildlife sanctuary
BIHAR	Kabartal Wetland	2020	First Ramsar site of Bihar
	Nagi Bird Sanctuary	2023	Freshwater lake
	Nakti Bird Sanctuary	2023	Freshwater lake
	Gokul Jalashay	2025	Reservoir
	Udaipur Jheel	2025	Oxbow-type lake in West Champaran
	Gogabil Lake	2025	Natural oxbow lake of Kosi–Mahananda system
SIKKIM	Khachoedpalri Wetland	2024	High altitude alpine lake
ASSAM	Deepor Beel	2002	Shallow freshwater lake
MANIPUR	Loktak Lake	1990	Only ' phumdi ' (floating biomass) lake; last natural habitat of endangered Sangai deer .
MIZORAM	Pala Wetland	2021	Largest natural lake of Mizoram; surrounded by subtropical forests.
TRIPURA	Rudrasagar Lake	2005	Palace-fringed lake (Neermahal); important for regional waterbirds.



WEST BENGAL	East Kolkata Wetland	2002	World's largest sewage-fed aquaculture system; treats Kolkata's wastewater through fish ponds.
	Sundarban Wetland	2019	Largest Ramsar site of India ; mangrove tiger landscape and cyclone buffer.
ODISHA	Chilika Lake	1981	Asia's largest brackish lagoon ; first Indian Ramsar site, habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins.
	Bhitarkanika Mangroves	2002	Second largest mangrove ecosystem of India; famous for saltwater crocodiles.
	Ansupa Lake	2021	Horse-shoe shaped freshwater lake near Cuttack; Odisha's largest freshwater lake.
	Hirakud Reservoir	2021	Large multipurpose reservoir on Mahanadi; important for waterbirds and fisheries.
	Tampara Lake	2021	Freshwater lagoon near Bay of Bengal; supports tourism and fishing.
	Satkosia Gorge	2021	Mahanadi river gorge; combines riverine, forest and canyon habitats.
JHARKHAND	Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary	2025	Twin-lake system (Pataura & Berhale); first Ramsar site of Jharkhand on Ganga floodplain.
CHHATTISGARH	Kopra Reservoir	2025	First Ramsar site of Chhattisgarh; supporting large wintering waterbird flocks.
MADHYA PRADESH	Bhoj Wetland	2002	classic case of urban wetland restoration.
	Sakhya Sagar	2022	Reservoir inside Madhav NP.
	Sirpur Wetland	2022	Seasonal wetland near Indore.
	Yashwant Sagar	2022	known for bar-headed geese.
	Tawa reservoir	2024	located within the Satpura Tiger Reserve.



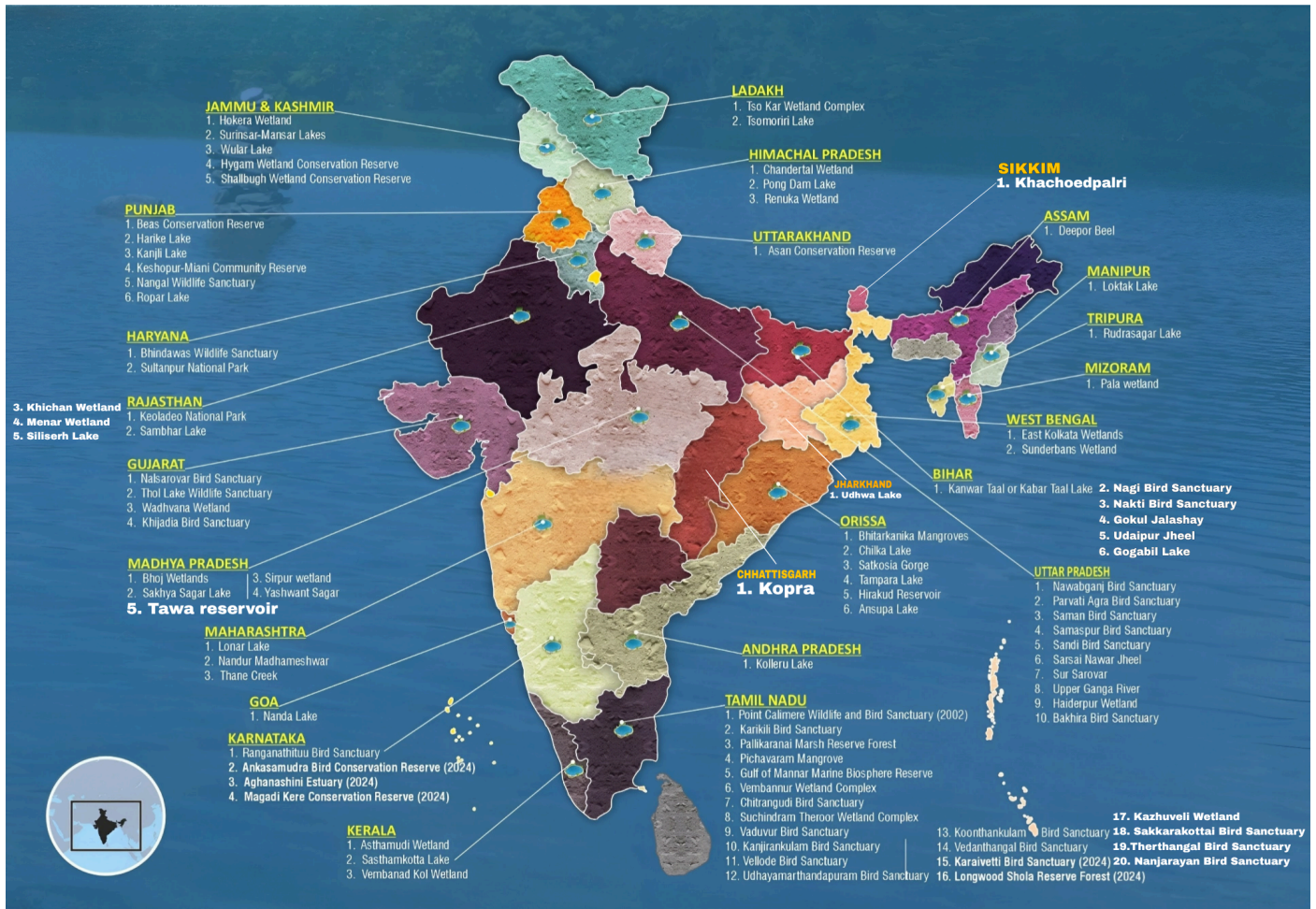
RAJASTHAN	Keoladeo National Park	1981	UNESCO World Heritage bird sanctuary; historically wintering site of Siberian crane.
	Sambhar Lake	1990	India's largest inland salt lake ; major flamingo breeding ground.
	Khichan Wetland	2025	Desert village pond system; famous for huge flocks of demoiselle cranes.
	Menar Wetland	2025	"Bird village" of Udaipur; community-protected ponds.
	Siliserh Lake	2025	Scenic reservoir near Alwar.
PUNJAB	Harike Wetland	1990	At Beas–Sutlej confluence.
	Ropar Lake	2002	Reservoir on Sutlej.
	Kanjli Wetland	2002	Kali Bein-fed lake; religious and ecological significance.
	Keshopur–Miani Community Reserve	2019	India's first community-reserve Ramsar wetland.
	Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	2019	Satluj reservoir stretch; supports diverse waterbirds.
	Beas Conservation Reserve	2019	Riverine stretch of Beas; habitat of endangered Indus river dolphin.
HARYANA	Sultanpur National Park	2021	key wintering ground on Central Asian Flyway.
	Bhindawas WLS	2021	Largest wetland of Haryana; man-made lake functioning as important bird habitat.
GUJARAT	Nalsarovar Lake	2012	Largest natural wetland of Gujarat.
	Thol Lake WLS	2021	Famous for pelicans, cranes and storks.
	Wadhvana Wetland	2021	Community-managed tank near Vadodara
	Khijadia WLS	2021	Coastal–inland mosaic wetland; known for high diversity of flamingos and shorebirds.



MAHARASHTRA	Nandur Madhameshwar	2019	First Ramsar site of Maharashtra; Godavari riverine wetland complex.
	Lonar Lake	2020	Hyper-alkaline meteorite-impact crater lake; unique geochemical ecosystem.
	Thane Creek	2022	Tidal estuary with mangroves; famous for flamingo congregations in Mumbai region.
GOA	Nanda Lake	2022	A freshwater marsh system connected to the Zuari River
KARNATAKA	Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary	2022	River-island wetland on Cauvery.
	Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve	2022	Famous for bar-headed geese flocks.
	Aghanashini Estuary	2022	Least-dammed west-coast estuary; sustains rich mangroves and artisanal fisheries.
	Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve	2022	Irrigation tank in Ballari; supports large congregation of pelicans and spoonbills.
ANDHRA PRADESH	Kolleru Lake	2002	One of India's largest shallow freshwater lakes between Godavari–Krishna deltas; major Central Asian Flyway stopover.
TAMILNADU	Point Calimere WLS	2002	Coastal wetland with salt marsh and mangroves; important for shorebirds
	Karikili Bird Sanctuary	2022	Small tank sanctuary; forms wetland complex with Vedanthangal.
	Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary	2022	Largest reserve for breeding resident waterbirds in TN.
	Pallikaranai Marsh	2022	Only remaining natural wetland in south Chennai; under heavy urban pressure.
	Pichavaram Mangroves	2022	One of Asia's largest mangrove forests; popular for eco-tourism boating.
	Suchindram–Theroor Wetland Complex	2022	Kanyakumari



TAMILNADU	Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary	2022	Small tank on Cauvery delta.
	Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary	2022	Irrigation tank
	Vellode Bird Sanctuary	2022	Man-made tank near Erode.
	Vembannur Wetland Complex	2022	Small coastal lagoon; among the smallest Ramsar sites.
	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	2022	Oldest bird sanctuary in India; centuries-old community protection.
	Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary	2022	
	Longwood Shola	2022	High-altitude evergreen shola forest wetland in Nilgiris.
	Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary	2022	
	Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve	2022	India's first marine biosphere reserve with rich coral-seagrass habitats.
	Kazhuveli Wetland	2024	Second largest brackish lagoon in south India after Pulicat.
	Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary	2025	
	Therthangal Bird Sanctuary	2025	
	Nanjarayan Tank Bird Sanctuary	2025	
KERALA	Ashtamudi Wetland	2002	Large estuarine backwater.
	Sasthamkotta Lake	2002	Largest freshwater lake of Kerala.
	Vembanad-Kol Wetland	2002	Biggest Ramsar wetland in Kerala; backwater-rice (Kuttanad) system.



Analytical Insights

- **First & oldest Indian Ramsar Sites** (1981): Chilika Lake (Odisha) and Keoladeo Ghana National Park (Rajasthan) – both designated in 1981.
- **Highest numbers:** Tamil Nadu – 20 sites
- **Largest:** Sundarban Wetland, West Bengal – 4,230 km² (4,23,000 ha).
- **Smallest:** Renuka Lake (Himachal Pradesh) and Vembannur Wetland Complex (Tamil Nadu) – both under 1 km² (highly compact sites)

Unique types:

- Only sewage-fed Ramsar wetland – East Kolkata Wetlands (West Bengal).
- Crater lake Ramsar site – Lonar Lake (Maharashtra).
- High-altitude saline lakes – Tsomoriri and Tso Kar (Ladakh).
- Floating ‘phumdi’ ecosystem – Loktak Lake (Manipur).
- Largest brackish lagoon in Asia – Chilika Lake (Odisha).



Inland vs coastal wetland trends:

- Inland (lakes, reservoirs, rivers, floodplains, marshes) clearly dominate – sites like Kolleru, Loktak, Bhoj, Kabartal, Haiderpur, Asan, Harike, Bhoj, Tawa, etc., form the bulk of the list.
- Coastal/marine and mangrove sites are fewer but high-impact: Chilika, Bhitarkanika, Pichavaram, Gulf of Mannar, Vembanad-Kol, Thane Creek, Sundarbans, Khijadia, Aghanashini estuary etc.

Recent additions :

- Khichan (Phalodi), Rajasthan
- Menar Wetland, Rajasthan
- Siliserh Lake, Rajasthan
- Gokul Jalashay, Bihar
- Udaipur Jheel, Bihar
- Gogabeel Lake, Bihar
- Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary, Jharkhand
- Kopra Reservoir, Chhattisgarh

States with No Ramsar site:-

Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya

Mains Enrichment

• Wetlands and climate resilience

- Wetlands store carbon in peat, soil and biomass (e.g., mangroves like Sundarbans, Pichavaram, and inland marshes).
- They buffer floods and storm surges: Sundarbans, Bhitarkanika, Gulf of Mannar, Pichavaram reduce cyclone and tsunami impacts along the east coast.
- Floodplain and reservoir wetlands (e.g., Haiderpur, Kolleru, Hirakud, Tawa) moderate high flows and support groundwater recharge.
- Use phrases like “nature-based solutions”, “blue–green infrastructure”, “ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR)” in answers.

• Wetlands and biodiversity conservation

- Ramsar sites protect critical habitats for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway and East Asian–Australasian Flyway – e.g., Harike, Keoladeo, Nalsarovar, Chilika, Haiderpur, Menar, Khichan.
- Many sites support flagship and threatened species: Sangai deer in Loktak; Royal Bengal Tiger in Sundarbans; Irrawaddy dolphin in Chilika; sarus crane in Sur Sarovar and Asan; vultures in Menar; river dolphin in Upper Ganga.
- In Mains, link Ramsar sites to: Aichi Targets / Kunming–Montreal GBF, India’s National Biodiversity Action Plan, Species-specific recovery programmes for tiger, dolphin, crane, vulture etc.



- **Ramsar + NPCA + Amrit Dharohar (integrated framework)**

- NPCA (National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems) – umbrella scheme for lake and wetland conservation under MoEFCC; finances restoration of major wetlands, including Ramsar ones.
- Ramsar designation gives international recognition, eligibility for technical support and visibility, but implementation is through national and state programmes like NPCA, CAMPA, etc.
- Amrit Dharohar (Budget 2023-24) – aims to enhance local livelihood potential of Ramsar wetlands through sustainable eco-tourism, traditional occupations, and community participation, converging with Ramsar and NPCA.
- “India is moving from a purely protectionist approach to ‘wise use’ and community-based management, integrating Ramsar, NPCA and Amrit Dharohar for ecological and livelihood outcomes.”

- **Governance challenges**

- Fragmented institutional arrangements – multiple agencies (MoEFCC, state wetland authorities, irrigation, fisheries, tourism, urban bodies) with poor convergence; leads to encroachment, pollution, and unsustainable tourism (e.g., East Kolkata, Pallikaranai, Kolleru, Sambhar).
- Land-use change and encroachment – conversion to real estate, agriculture, and infrastructure has affected wetlands like Sambhar, Deepor Beel, Kolleru, Pallikaranai.
- Pollution and eutrophication – sewage inflow, industrial effluents, solid waste in urban/peri-urban wetlands (e.g., East Kolkata Wetlands, Bhoj, Kolleru, Rudrasagar).
- Hydrological alterations – dams, embankments and diversions modifying hydrology (e.g., Kolleru’s regulators, Ganga barrages near Haiderpur, Hirakud reservoir operations).
- Climate change impacts – sea-level rise and salinity intrusion in Sundarbans, Bhitarkanika, Gulf of Mannar, glacial melt changes in Tsomoriri, Tso Kar, Khachodpalri.
- Weak enforcement and data gaps – limited real-time monitoring, weak implementation of Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017, and poor integration of Ramsar information in local planning.

Conclusion : strengthen State Wetland Authorities, integrate wetlands into land-use and climate planning, leverage Amrit Dharohar for community stewardship, and improve GIS-based inventory and monitoring of all wetlands, not just Ramsar ones.

HAPPY LEARNING

