

Ramsar Sites in India - List of Ramsar Sites [UPSC Environment & Ecology Notes]

Ramsar Sites are the wetlands that have international importance. The term was coined when the International Treaty for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Wetlands was signed at a city of Iran called Ramsar in 1971. The topic, 'Ramsar Sites of India' is important for the upcoming [IAS Exam](#) as recently Sambhar Lake had been in the news for its deterioration over salt mining. Sambhar Lake is a Ramsar Site in India. Hence, candidates should read about Ramsar Sites and the Ramsar Convention for UPSC preparation. Read on to get the relevant facts about Ramsar Sites and the list of Ramsar Sites.

Ramsar Sites in India – Latest Addition

In December 2020, the Tso Kar Wetland Complex was added to the list of Ramsar sites in India. This includes the high-altitude wetland complex of two connected lakes, Startsapuk Tso and Tso Kar, in Ladakh.

The following sites have been added as the recognized Ramsar Sites in India:

1. Maharashtra – Lonar Lake
2. Agra (Uttar Pradesh) – Sur Sarovar also called, Keetham Lake
3. Uttarakhand – Asan Barrage
4. Bihar – Kanwar Lake or Kabal Taal

Facts about Ramsar Sites & Indian Wetlands

The table below provides relevant facts in brief for the use in UPSC Exam:

Ramsar Sites in India & Indian Wetlands	
What are Ramsar Sites?	Any wetland site which has been listed under the Ramsar Convention that aims to conserve it and promote sustainable use of its natural resources is called a Ramsar Site.
What is the Ramsar Convention?	Ramsar Convention is known as the Convention of Wetlands. It was established in 1971 by UNESCO and came into force in 1975. Read more about the Ramsar Convention for UPSC at the linked article.
Is India a part of the Ramsar Convention?	Yes, India is a party to the Ramsar Convention. India signed under it on 1st February 1982.
How many Ramsar Sites are in India?	There are 42 Ramsar Sites in India [Latest]
Which is the largest	Chilika Lake is the largest Ramsar Site of India

Ramsar Site in India?	
Which is the first Ramsar Site in India?	Chilika Lake (Orissa) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) were recognized as the first Ramsar Sites of India
Which Indian state has the most number of Ramsar Sites?	Uttar Pradesh has the most number of Ramsar Sites in India. It has 8 Indian Wetlands.
Which is the smallest wetland in India?	Renuka Wetland in Himachal Pradesh is the smallest wetland of India.
Current Updates Regarding Indian Ramsar Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Dec 2020, the Tso Kar Wetland Complex in Ladakh has been added to the list. • Asan Barrage is designated as the Wetland of International Importance 21st July 2020 • Kanwar Lake in the Bihar's first Ramsar Site designated on 21st July 2020 • Lonar Lake and Sur Sarovar added in India's list of Ramsar Sites in November 2020 • Ayeyarwady in Manipur is eyed as a potential Ramsar site • In January 2020, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) announced the entry of 10 more wetlands from India into the list of Ramsar Sites. With this entry, Maharashtra got its first Ramsar site, Punjab which already had 3 Ramsar sites adds 3 more, and UP with 1 Ramsar site has added 6 more.

Other Interesting Facts about the Ramsar sites:

1. Ramsar sites are one of the major protected areas in the world.
2. There are currently over 2400 Ramsar sites in the world covering an area of 2.5 million sq. kilometres.
3. World's First Ramsar site was identified in 1974, which was the Cobourg Peninsula in Australia.
4. The United Kingdom has the world's largest number of Ramsar sites i.e 175.
5. February 2 is celebrated as International Wetlands Day as the Ramsar Convention was signed on February 2, 1971.
6. The Ramsar Convention works with the collaboration of the following organizations:
 1. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
 2. Birdlife International.
 3. International Water Management Institute (IWMI).
 4. Wetlands International.
 5. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)
 6. WWF International
7. To research any of the Ramsar sites, one can check the Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS)

8. The number of contracting parties for the Ramsar Convention as of October 2019 is 171.

List of Ramsar Sites in India

The Ramsar Convention was signed in 1971 with the aim of “conservation and wise use of wetlands with local, national and international cooperation for overall sustainable development of the world”.

The Ramsar sites are maintained in Montreux Record to track any major ecological changes that might affect any of the wetland sites positively or in a reverse way.

The Ramsar convention entered into force in India on 1 February 1982. The 14 new Ramsar sites of India announced by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) includes:

- Sur Sarovar, Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and Sarsai Nawar (Uttar Pradesh)
- Lonar Lake, Nandur Madhameshwar (Maharashtra)
- Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve and Nangal (Punjab)
- Asan Barrage (Uttarakhand)
- Kanwar Lake (Bihar)

The Sunderban Reserve Forest (Sunderban Wetlands) also made its entry into the list of Ramsar sites in India on 1st February 2020.

The latest site to be added to the list is a high-altitude wetland complex of two connected lakes, Startsapuk Tso and Tso Kar, in Ladakh. **India currently has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). This is the highest in South Asia.**

Indian Wetlands and Ramsar Sites are important topics covered in Environment & Ecology in UPSC Syllabus. Candidates can get [Environment Questions for UPSC Mains GS 3](#) in the linked article. This can help candidates to practice all previous years' questions related to Biodiversity, Environment, and Ecology.

List of Ramsar sites in India [Latest]

Ramsar Sites in India	State – Location
Ashtamudi Wetland	Kerala
Beas Conservation Reserve	Punjab
Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Odisha
Bhoj Wetlands	Madhya Pradesh
Chandra Taal	Himachal Pradesh

Chilika Lake	Odisha
Deepor Beel	Assam
East Kolkata Wetlands	West Bengal
Harike Wetlands	Punjab
Hokera Wetland	Jammu & Kashmir
Kanjli Wetland	Punjab
Keoladeo National Park	Rajasthan
Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve	Punjab
Kolleru lake	Andhra Pradesh
Loktak lake	Manipur
Nalsarovar Bird sanctuary	Gujarat
Nandur Madhameshwar	Maharashtra
Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	Punjab
Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Parvati Agra Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu
Pong Dam lake	Himachal Pradesh
Renuka lake	Himachal Pradesh
Ropar Wetland	Punjab
Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura
Saman Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh

Sambhar lake	Rajasthan
Sandi Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh
Sarsai Nawar Jheel	Uttar Pradesh
Sasthamkotta lake	Kerala
Surinsar- Mansar lakes	Jammu & Kashmir
Tsomoriri	Ladakh
Upper Ganga river	Uttar Pradesh
Vembanad Kol Wetland	Kerala
Wular lake	Jammu & Kashmir
Sunderban Wetland	West Bengal
Asan Barrage	Uttarakhand
Kanwar Lake or Kabal Taal	Bihar
Lonar Lake	Maharashtra
Sur Sarovar	Uttar Pradesh
Tso Kar Wetland Complex	Ladakh

UPSC Questions on Ramsar Sites in India

Which state has more Ramsar Sites in India?

Uttar Pradesh has the 8 Ramsar sites out of 42 Ramsar sites in India, followed by Punjab which has 6 Ramsar sites.

How is Ramsar Site declared and who declares it?

Ramsar Sites in India are declared under the Ramsar Convention which was established by UNESCO in 1971. A site is declared as a Ramsar Wetland Site in India if it meets any one of the nine criteria set under the Convention of Wetland.

How many Ramsar Sites are there?

There are a total of 2400 Ramsar Sites in the world, including 42 Ramsar sites in India.

Which is the largest Ramsar Site in India?

Chilika Lake in Odisha (1165 sq.km) is the largest Indian Ramsar site, followed by Vembanad Kol wetland (1512.5 sq.km) in Kerala.

Which is the smallest Ramsar Site in India?

Renuka Wetland (0.2 sq.km) of Himachal Pradesh is the smallest Ramsar Site in India, followed by Chandertal Wetland (0.49 sq.km) in Himachal Pradesh.

Which is the latest Ramsar Site in India?

Tso Kar Wetland Complex (Ladakh), Lonar Lake (Maharashtra), Sur Sarovar (Uttar Pradesh), Asan Barrage (Uttarakhand), and Kanwar Lake (Bihar) are the latest Ramsar Sites in India.