

Ramsar Convention

Ramsar Convention is a convention on wetlands that was signed in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. The negotiations for the convention started in the 1960s by the different countries and NGOs for the protection of wetlands and their resources. Finally, it came into force in 1975. There are [42 Ramsar Sites in India](#) listed under Ramsar Convention.

The topic, 'Ramsar Convention' is one of the important [Environment Conventions](#). Read about similar topics below:

1. [Vienna Convention](#)
2. [Stockholm Convention](#)
3. [Bonn Convention](#)
4. [Basel Convention](#)
5. [Rotterdam Convention](#)

India has added 10 more wetlands to the sites protected by the Ramsar Convention.

These are:

- Maharashtra: Nandur (state's first).
- Punjab: Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve, and Nangal.
- Uttar Pradesh: Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi, and Sarsai Nawar.

This addition will help in achieving India's ambitious mission 'Nal se Jal' which aims to provide piped water connection to every household by 2024.

Evolution of Ramsar Convention

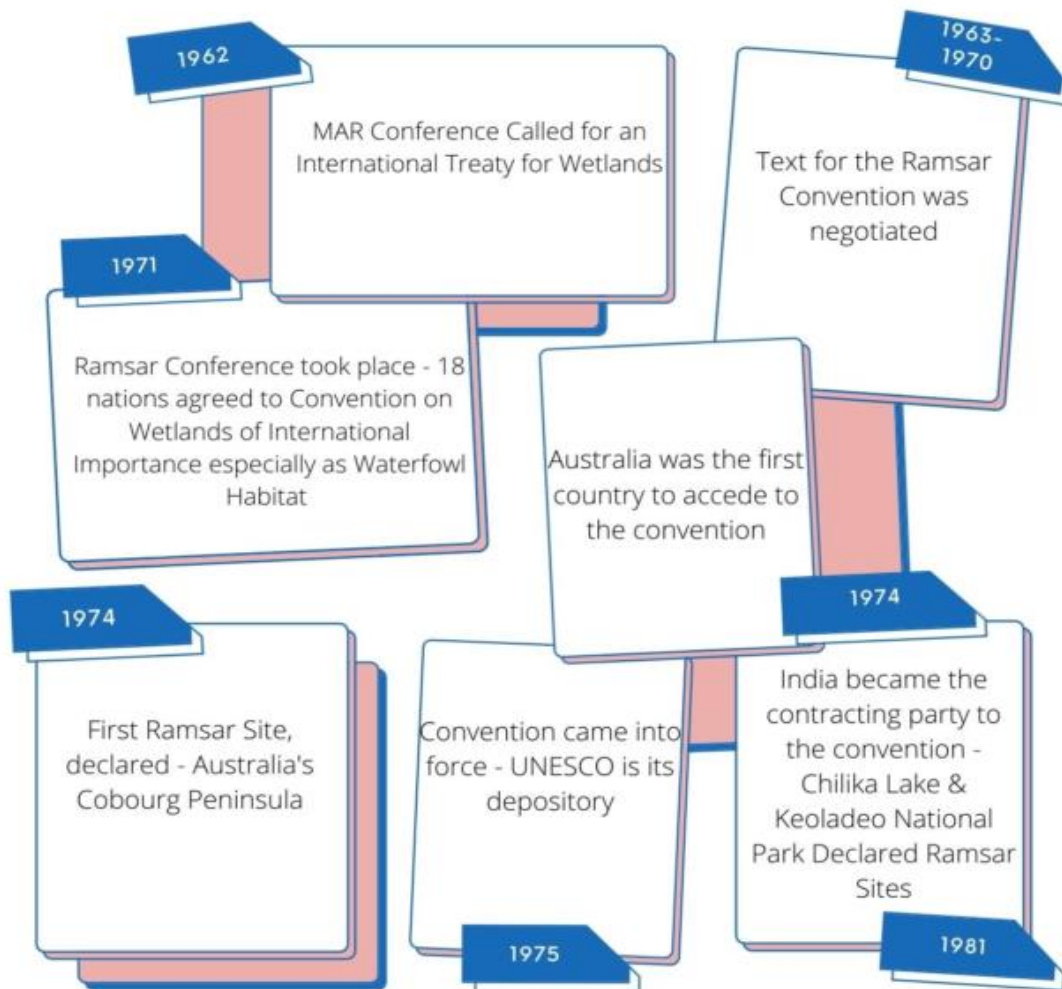
The Ramsar Convention came into force in 1975 with a mission to conserve and use wisely all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world. The evolution of this convention on wetlands is

depicted:

RAMSAR CONVENTION

ADOPTED IN 1971

For the conservation of wetlands of national and international importance



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What is the purpose of the Ramsar Convention?

The convention works on **three pillars** that define the purpose of the Ramsar Convention:

1. **Wise Use** – To work towards the wise use of all wetlands
2. **List of Wetlands of International Importance** – Designate suitable wetlands under the Ramsar List to effectively manage those
3. **International Cooperation** – To bring cooperation internationally over the transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

What are wetlands?

As per the broad definition of Ramsar Convention, “Wetlands are “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.”

Examples of Wetlands are:

- Marine and coastal areas
- Estuaries
- Lakes and rivers
- Marshes and peatlands
- Groundwater and human-made wetlands such as rice paddies, shrimp ponds, and reservoirs

How many countries are there in the Ramsar Convention?

As of October 2020, there are 171 contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention.

Important Facts about the Ramsar Convention for UPSC

The following facts are from the exam’s perspective and can be beneficial for both Prelims and Mains stages of the [IAS Exam](#).

1. It is the only international treaty that addresses a specific ecosystem (wetland.)
2. Originally, the treaty focussed on the conservation of the habitats for waterbirds.
3. The official name of the treaty is The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.
4. With time, the treaty has broadened its horizon and covers all aspects of wetland conservation.
5. The Ramsar Conventions contains three important subjects:
 1. The contracting parties which are now 171 in numbers have to designate suitable wetlands in their territory under the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.
 2. The designated wetlands have to be wisely used and taken care of.

3. Shared wetland systems over the territories of more than one contracting party have to be used wisely by the parties concerned after due consultation
6. As of June 2021, there are 2422 wetlands in the list of wetlands of international importance.
7. Ramsar Convention is not a regulatory regime.
8. Ramsar Convention was modified by the Paris Protocol in 1982 and by the Regina Amendments in 1987.
9. Montreux Record – It is a mechanism that was launched in 1990 and is associated with the Ramsar Advisory Mission. It is a register of the list of those Ramsar Sites that need urgent attention. One can read more about [Montreux Record](#) at the linked article.
10. World Wetlands Day – It was first celebrated in 1997. It is celebrated each year on 2nd February to mark the anniversary of the Ramsar Convention and promote its mission.
11. A conference of the contracting parties (COP) to the convention meets every three years.
12. The Ramsar Convention has six international organization partners:
 1. Birdlife International
 2. [IUCN](#)
 3. Wetlands International
 4. [WWF](#)
 5. International Water Management Institute
 6. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
13. The convention comes with a six-year strategic plan. The latest one is the 4th Ramsar Convention Strategic Plan 2016-2024 which was approved at COP12 of the convention.
14. Ramsar Convention's Standing Committee has 18 members that are elected at COP till the next COP elects new members.
15. The Convention works in three languages – English, Spanish and French.

Know in detail about [Ramsar Convention and its mission](#) on the linked page.

India and Wetland Conservation

Ramsar Convention entered into force in the country on 1st February 1981. India's initiatives to conserve the national wetlands (4.63% of the total geographical area) are:

1. [Wetlands \(Conservation and Management\) Rules, 2017](#)
2. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change released a set of guidelines in January 2020 for implementation of the Wetland Rules 2017.
3. India regulated the following wetlands:
 1. Wetlands designated under the Ramsar List.
 2. Those wetlands are notified under central, state, and UT rules.
4. India does not regulate the following wetlands under Wetlands Rules:
 1. River channels
 2. Paddy fields
 3. Human-made water bodies specifically constructed for drinking water purposes; aquaculture purposes; salt production purposes; recreation purposes; and for irrigation purposes
 4. Wetlands falling within areas covered under the Indian Forest Act, 1927; Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; and State Forest Acts.
 5. Wetlands falling within areas covered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

6. Wetlands falling within areas covered under the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2011.

