

Five More Indian Wetlands Added To Ramsar List

Why In News

- **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate** Shri Bhupender Yadav said on the eve of World Wetlands Day 2024, India has **increased its tally of Ramsar sites** (Wetlands of International Importance) to **80 from existing 75** by designating five more wetlands as Ramsar sites.



- In a post Shri Yadav said he met Dr Musonda Mumba, the Secretary General of Ramsar Convention who handed over the certificates of the aforesaid five sites.

World Wetlands Day

- **World Wetlands Day** was celebrated on the **2nd of February** across the globe. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on **2nd February 1971** in the **Iranian city of Ramsar**.
- The **Ramsar Convention** is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- 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.
- It was first celebrated in 1997.

World Wetlands Day

2 February 2024



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All You Need To Know

- **Five more Indian wetlands** have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, taking the total number of such highly recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the country to 80, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on January 31.
- Of the **five wetlands added to the Ramsar list**, Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, and Aghanashini Estuary are in Karnataka and Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest are in Tamil Nadu.



Bhupender Yadav ✓
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Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, today handed over the Ramsar Site certificates for:

- ◆ Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu
- ◆ Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Karnataka
- ◆ Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, Tamil Nadu
- ◆ Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, Karnataka
- ◆ Aghanashini Estuary, Karnataka

- **The aim of the Ramsar list** is "to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands, which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life, through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits".
- Mr. Yadav said the emphasis **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has put on environmental protection and conservation has led to a paradigm shift in how India treats its wetlands. "This reflects in the Amrit Dharohar initiative envisioned by PM Modi," he said.
- **The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty** for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. It is named after the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the Caspian Sea, where the treaty was signed on February 2, 1971.

New Sites Added

- **Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve** is a humanmade **Village Irrigation Tank built** centuries back and is spread over an area of 98.76ha (244.04 acre) adjoining the Ankasamudra village.
- It is an ecologically important wetland, rich in biodiversity, comprising over 210 species of plants, 8 species of mammals, 25 species of reptiles, 240 species of birds, 41 species of fishes, 3 species of frogs, 27 species of butterflies and 32 species of odonates.



- Over 30'000 waterbirds nest and roost at this wetland, which also **supports more than 1% of the biogeographic population** of Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*) and Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*).
- **Aghanashini Estuary**, spread over an area of **4801 ha**, is formed at the **confluence of Aghanashini River** with the Arabian sea. The brackish water of the Estuary provides diverse ecosystem services including flood and erosion risk mitigation, biodiversity conservation and livelihood support.
- The wetland also provides **livelihoods to 6000-7500 families** by supporting fishing, agriculture, collection of edible bivalves and crabs, shrimp aquaculture, traditional fish farming in the estuarine rice fields (locally known as Gazni rice fields), bivalve shell collection and salt production.
- Additionally, the mangroves bordering the estuary help to protect the shores against storms and cyclones. The **estuary regularly supports over 43,000 counts of over 66 waterbird species and 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).



- **Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve**, is a human-made wetland with an area of nearly 50 hectares which was constructed to store rainwater for irrigation purposes. It is home to over **166 species of birds**, of which 130 are migratory.



- The wetland harbours two vulnerable species, namely Common pochard (*Aythya ferina*) and River tern (*Sterna aurantia*) and four near-threatened species, namely Oriental Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*), Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), Woolly-necked Stork (*Ciconia episcopus*) and Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*). Nearly 8,000 birds visit the site during winter. Magadi Kere is also one of the largest wintering grounds for the Bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*) in Southern India. The wetland is a designated Important Bird Area (IBA) and also listed as a priority area for conservation in India.



- Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary** spanning 453.72 ha is one of the largest inland wetlands of Tamil Nadu, and is a significant source of groundwater recharge for the area. **Water from the wetland** is utilized by the villagers for cultivating agricultural crops such as paddy, sugar cane, cotton, corn, and split red gram. Karaivetti has one of the largest congregations of waterbirds in the State of Tamil Nadu. About 198 species of birds have been recorded here; some of the important visitors being the Bar headed Goose, Pin-tailed duck, Garganey, Northern Shoveler, Common Pochard, Eurasian Wigeon, Common teal and Cotton teal.



- The **Longwood Shola Reserve Forest** derives its name from the Tamil word, "Solai", which means a 'tropical rain forest'. The 'Sholas' are found in the upper reaches of the Nilgiris, Anamalais, Palni hills, Kalakadu, Mundanthurai and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. **These forested wetlands** serve as habitats for the globally endangered Black-chinned Nilgiri Laughing thrush (*Strophocincla cachinnans*), Nilgiri Blue Robin (*Myiomela major*), and vulnerable Nilgiri Wood-

pigeon (*Columba elphinstonii*). As many as 14 out of 26 endemic birds species of the Western Ghats are found in these wetlands.

