

Newly declared Ramsar sites

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister welcomed new Ramsar sites at Patna Bird Sanctuary and Chhari-Dhand.

- **Location** - The new Ramsar sites are
 - **Patna Bird Sanctuary** - Etah district, Uttar Pradesh.
 - **Chhari-Dhand** - Kutch district, Gujarat.
- **Key Highlights** -
 - Both wetlands are vital habitats for migratory and native species.
 - India's Ramsar network **expanded from 26 (2014) to 98 (2026), an increase of over 276%.**
 - India has the highest number of Ramsar sites among Asian countries.
- **Patna Bird Sanctuary - Habitat** - A wetland bird sanctuary with a lake ecosystem.
 - During summers, the lake is covered with macrophytic vegetation such as water hyacinth and Potamogeton species.
- **Biodiversity** - Supports migratory and resident birds, including Pied mynas, herons, cormorants, ducks and geese;
 - Important aquatic birds include Lesser Whistling Duck, Graylag Goose, Comb Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail.
- **Significance** - It is the **smallest bird sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh.**
- **Chhari-Dhand - Population** - Attracts numerous migratory birds every year during the monsoon and winter seasons.
- **Habitat** - Seasonal desert wetland located between the arid Banni grasslands and **marshy salt flats of the Rann of Kutch.**
 - It becomes swampy during the monsoon and is fed by north-flowing rivers and surrounding hills.
- **Biodiversity** - Endangered species such as Dalmatian Pelican, Oriental Darter, Black-necked Stork and Indian Skimmer.

- It also supports chinkara, wolves, caracal, desert cats and desert foxes.
- **Significance** - Located at the *interface of grasslands and salt flats*.
- Rich biodiversity makes it a major bird-watching destination.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

- Ramsar site is a **wetland of International Importance** mentioned under the Ramsar Convention.
- It 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.
- **Adoption** - In 1971 (Ramsar, Iran) and enforced in 1975. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem.
- **Definition** - 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.
- It also includes areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed 6 meters.
- **India's position** - India became a contracting party in 1981.
- 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.
- Ramsar Convention is not affiliated with the United Nations system of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- Every year, *2nd February is celebrated as World Wetlands Day*.

References

1. [PIB | New Ramsar sites](#)
2. [TH | New Ramsar sites](#)