Surha Tal - India’s 100th Ramsar Site

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in News?

Prime Minister lauds designation of India's 100th Ramsar site on World Environment Day.

- **Location** – Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Surah Taal** – It is a freshwater wetland in the middle stretch of the Ganga River basin.
- It was originally formed from a meander of the Ganga and receives freshwater inflow through three channels.
- **Origin –** In 1991, ‘Surha Taal’ was created with the consolidation of the land area of 45 villages of Baansdih in the Ballia town area, aggregating to a total of 3432.93 hectares area.
- **Renaming** – In 2002, its name was changed to “Jai Prakash Narain Bird Sanctuary”.
- **Landscape** – The landscape in and around the Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary is characterized by floodplains, extensive marshes, seasonally flooded areas and rice paddies.
- **Refuge for Waterbirds** – During the summer, when smaller wetlands dry out, the Site provides an important refuge for waterbirds.
- Species include the **vulnerable common pochard (Aythya ferina)** and the **Indian river tern (Sterna aurantia)**.
- **Biodiversity Supported –** The Site supports a rich diversity of other species, including 221 plant species, 66 fish species, seven reptile species, and three amphibian species.
- Notable fish include the vulnerable Wallago attu and Bagarius bagarius.
- The abundance of fish also attracts the vulnerable fishing cat (Prionailurus viverrinus), which uses the Site as a feeding ground.
- It serves as a critical wintering ground for avian species traveling along the Central Asian Flyway.
- **Management Measures –** To prevent over-fishing and resource depletion, authorities enforce seasonal controls & ban on destructive practices.

*Globally, there are **nearly 2,595** such designated wetlands under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.*

*India has the **highest number of such wetlands in Asia** & **3rd** highest in the world after the UK (176) and Mexico (144).*

To know more about Wetlands & Ramsar Sites, Click below

Ramsar 15th Cop; State wise Ramsar sites; World Wetlands Day

References

1. Indian Express | India's 100th Ramsar site
2. Times of India | India's 100th Ramsar Site