

Gogabeel Lake: India's 94th Ramsar Site (2025)

1. Introduction

- India has added **Gogabeel Lake in Bihar** to its list of **Ramsar Sites**, marking the **94th internationally recognised wetland** under the **Ramsar Convention**.
- This inclusion highlights India's **continued commitment to wetland conservation** and sustainable management.
- Date of Recognition:** November 2025
- Location:** Katihar District, Bihar

2. Geographical and Ecological Features

- Type:** Oxbow Lake (formed when a river meander is cut off from the main channel).
- Position:** Lies between the **Ganga** and **Mahananda Rivers** in north Bihar.
- Ecological Role:**
 - Functions as a **floodplain wetland**, maintaining local hydrological balance.
 - Serves as a **critical habitat** for **migratory and resident birds**, fish, and aquatic plants.
 - Acts as a **natural flood buffer** and **groundwater recharge zone**.
- Seasonal Dynamics:** During the monsoon, the lake connects to both the Ganga and Mahananda rivers, enriching biodiversity and water exchange.

3. Community-Based Conservation

- Bihar's First Community Reserve:** Gogabeel is **managed by local communities**, making it an example of **community-led conservation**.
- Local residents are directly involved in maintaining, monitoring, and conserving the wetland's biodiversity.
- Promotes **eco-friendly livelihoods** such as sustainable fishing, bird tourism,

and wetland farming.

4. Significance for Bihar

- **First Community Reserve** in Bihar.
- **Sixth Ramsar Site** in the state (after Gokul Jalashay and Udaipur Jheel).
- Highlights Bihar's **growing contribution** to India's wetland conservation network.
- Positions Bihar **third among Indian states** (after Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh) in number of Ramsar sites.

5. India's Growing Global Role in Wetland Conservation

- **Total Ramsar Sites (as of Nov 2025):** 94
- **Total Area Covered:** Over **13.6 lakh hectares**.
- **Global Ranking:**
 - 🇬🇧 United Kingdom – 176 sites
 - 🇲🇽 Mexico – 144 sites
 - 🇮🇳 India – 94 sites (Rank 3 globally, Rank 1 in Asia)
- India has added **67 wetlands in the last 11 years**, reflecting its **accelerated conservation efforts**.
- The announcement was made by **Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav**, reaffirming the government's emphasis on **community-based and sustainable wetland management**.

6. About the Ramsar Convention

- **Full Name:** Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.
- **Adopted:** 1971 at **Ramsar**, Iran.
- **Came into Force:** 1975.
- **Total Member Countries:** 172 (as of 2025).
- **Total Ramsar Sites Worldwide:** 2,546 sites.

- **Objective:**

- To **conserve and wisely use wetlands** through international cooperation.
- To recognise wetlands of **ecological, economic, and cultural importance**.

7. Importance of Ramsar Sites

- Recognised for their role in:
 - **Hydrological regulation** – balancing water cycles and recharging groundwater.
 - **Flood control and drought mitigation.**
 - **Biodiversity conservation** – supporting endangered species and migratory birds.
 - **Livelihood generation** – providing fish, reeds, and raw materials.
 - **Climate resilience** – acting as carbon sinks and buffers against extreme weather.

8. Exam-Oriented Key Facts

Fact	Details
Newly Added Site	Gogabeel Lake, Katihar District, Bihar
Designation Year	2025
Ramsar Site Number (India)	94th
Type of Wetland	Oxbow lake / floodplain wetland
Significance	Bihar's first community reserve
Bihar's Ramsar Sites (Total)	6
India's Rank (Global)	3rd (after UK and Mexico)
India's Total Ramsar Sites (2025)	94
Ramsar Convention Year & Place	1971, Ramsar (Iran)
India's Area under Ramsar Sites	13.6 lakh hectares (approx.)
Environment Minister (2025)	Bhupender Yadav

9. Broader Environmental Significance

- **Integrates local and global efforts:** Combines **grassroots stewardship** with international conservation goals.
- **Supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Especially SDG-13 (Climate Action) and SDG-15 (Life on Land).

- **Nature-Based Solutions:** Enhances India's approach to **climate resilience and ecological restoration**.
- **Symbol of India's Leadership:** Reflects India's growing **global standing in environmental diplomacy**.

10. Conclusion

- The inclusion of **Gogabeel Lake** as India's 94th Ramsar site represents a **milestone in wetland protection and community-led conservation**.
- It highlights **India's integrated vision** for balancing development with ecology.
- Gogabeel stands as a **model for sustainable coexistence** between **people and nature**, strengthening India's **eco-conservation and climate resilience agenda**.

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