The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: A Student Guide Updated with 85 Sites

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The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands: A Student Guide

The **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** is an international treaty aimed at protecting and sustainably using wetlands worldwide. These vital ecosystems support biodiversity and provide freshwater, food, and other resources. The treaty was signed in **Ramsar, Iran**, in **1971**, and came into effect in **1975**.

Today, **90% of UN member states**, spanning all continents, are part of this treaty, known as **Contracting Parties**. The annual **World Wetlands Day** is celebrated on **February 2nd**, marking the signing of the convention.

The Mission

The Convention focuses on the **“conservation and wise use of all wetlands”**, aiming to promote sustainable development through local, national, and international efforts.

Why Are Wetlands Important?

Wetlands are among the **richest ecosystems** on Earth, providing:

- **Essential Services**: Clean water, flood control, and climate regulation.
- **Biodiversity**: Habitat for countless species, including migratory birds.
- **Livelihoods**: Resources for millions of people worldwide.

Yet, wetlands are under threat from **pollution, climate change, and human activities**, making their conservation critical.

What Counts as a Wetland?

The Ramsar Convention uses a **broad definition** of wetlands, including:

- **Natural wetlands**: Lakes, rivers, swamps, mangroves, coral reefs.
- **Man-made wetlands**: Fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs, and salt pans.

The Three Pillars of the Ramsar Convention

Contracting Parties commit to:

1. **Wise Use**: Ensuring wetlands are used sustainably.
2. **Ramsar List**: Designating key wetlands as **Wetlands of International Importance**.
3. **International Cooperation**: Working together to manage shared wetlands and species.

Ramsar Sites in India □□

India has **85 Ramsar Sites** (as of November 2024), the highest in South Asia! **Tamil Nadu** leads with **18 Ramsar Sites**.

The latest additions in **2024** include:

- **Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary** (Tamil Nadu)
- **Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary** (Tamil Nadu)
- **Tawa Reservoir** (Madhya Pradesh)

Fun Facts About Ramsar Sites

- The world's **first Ramsar Site**: **Cobourg Peninsula**, Australia (1974).
- The country with the most Ramsar Sites: **United Kingdom (175)**.
- Largest Ramsar-protected area: **Bolivia**.
- India's largest Ramsar Site: **Sundarban Wetland (West Bengal)**.
- India's oldest Ramsar Site: **Chilika Lake (Odisha)**, designated in **1981**.

Largest Ramsar Sites in India

The following are the Ramsar Sites with the largest areas in India, showcasing their ecological significance:

Ramsar Site	State	Area (km²)
Sundarban Wetland	West Bengal	4,230
Vembanad-Kol Wetland	Kerala	1,512.5
Chilika Lake	Odisha	1,165
Kolleru Lake	Andhra Pradesh	901
Ashtamudi Wetland	Kerala	614

Smallest Ramsar Sites in India

Here are the Ramsar Sites with the smallest areas, highlighting their unique yet compact ecosystems:

Ramsar Site	State	Area (km²)
Renuka Lake	Himachal Pradesh	0.2
Vembannur Wetland	Tamil Nadu	0.2
Nanda Lake	Goa	0.42

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Ramsar Site	State	Area (km²)
Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	0.4
Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	0.44

Oldest Ramsar Sites in India

These Ramsar Sites were the first to be designated in India, marking their long-standing importance for conservation:

Ramsar Site	Year Designated
Chilika Lake	1981
Keoladeo Ghana National Park	1981

By understanding and valuing wetlands, we can ensure their protection for future generations. Let’s celebrate these incredible ecosystems and work towards their sustainable use! □□□□

Here is the list of all **85 Ramsar Sites in India (as of November 2024)** presented in a table format:

S.No.	Ramsar Site	State/UT	Designated Year	Area (km²)
1	Kolleru Lake	Andhra Pradesh	2002	901
2	Deepor Beel	Assam	2002	40
3	Kanwar (Kabar) Taal	Bihar	2020	26.2
4	Nagi Bird Sanctuary	Bihar	2023	2
5	Nakti Bird Sanctuary	Bihar	2023	3.3
6	Nanda Lake	Goa	2022	0.42
7	Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary	Gujarat	2021	6
8	Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary	Gujarat	2012	123
9	Thol Lake	Gujarat	2021	6.99
10	Wadhvana Wetland	Gujarat	2021	10.38
11	Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary	Haryana	2021	4.11
12	Sultanpur National Park	Haryana	2021	142.5
13	Chandra Taal	Himachal Pradesh	2005	0.49
14	Pong Dam Lake	Himachal Pradesh	2002	156.62
15	Renuka Lake	Himachal Pradesh	2005	0.2
16	Ranganathittu	Karnataka	2022	5.18

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S.No.	Ramsar Site	State/UT	Designated Year	Area (km²)
	Bird Sanctuary			
17	Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve	Karnataka	2024	0.5
18	Ankasamudra Bird Conservation	Karnataka	2024	0.98
19	Aghanashini Estuary	Karnataka	2024	4.8
20	Ashtamudi Wetland	Kerala	2002	614
21	Sasthamkotta Lake	Kerala	2002	3.73
22	Vembanad-Kol Wetland	Kerala	2002	1512.5
23	Bhoj Wetland	Madhya Pradesh	2002	32
24	Sakhya Sagar	Madhya Pradesh	2022	2.48
25	Sirpur Wetland	Madhya Pradesh	2022	1.61
26	Yashwant Sagar	Madhya Pradesh	2022	8.22
27	Tawa Reservoir	Madhya Pradesh	2024	200
28	Lonar Lake	Maharashtra	2020	4.27
29	Nandur Madhameshwar	Maharashtra	2019	14
30	Thane Creek	Maharashtra	2022	65.21
31	Loktak Lake	Manipur	1990	266
32	Pala Wetland	Mizoram	2021	18.5
33	Ansupa Lake	Odisha	2021	2.31
34	Bhitarkanika Mangroves	Odisha	2002	650
35	Chilika Lake	Odisha	1981	1165
36	Hirakud Reservoir	Odisha	2021	654
37	Satkosia Gorge	Odisha	2021	981.97
38	Tampara Lake	Odisha	2021	3
39	Beas Conservation Reserve	Punjab	2019	64
40	Harike Wetland	Punjab	1990	41
41	Kanjli Wetland	Punjab	2002	1.83
42	Keshopur-Miani Conservation Res.	Punjab	2019	34
43	Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary	Punjab	2019	1
44	Ropar Wetland	Punjab	2002	13.65
45	Keoladeo National Park	Rajasthan	1981	28.73
46	Sambhar Lake	Rajasthan	1990	240
47	Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2021	2.6

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S.No.	Ramsar Site	State/UT	Designated Year	Area (km²)
48	Gulf of Mannar Marine Reserve	Tamil Nadu	2022	526.72
49	Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.96
50	Karikili Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.584
51	Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2021	0.72
52	Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest	Tamil Nadu	2022	12.475
53	Pichavaram Mangrove	Tamil Nadu	2022	14.786
54	Point Calimere WLS	Tamil Nadu	2002	385
55	Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.94
56	Udhayamarthandapuram BS	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.44
57	Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2022	1.12
58	Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.4
59	Vellode Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.77
60	Vembannur Wetland Complex	Tamil Nadu	2022	0.2
61	Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2024	4.5
62	Longwood Shola Reserve Forest	Tamil Nadu	2024	1.16
63	Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2024	1.3
64	Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu	2024	1,513
65	Rudrasagar Lake	Tripura	2005	2.4
66	Hokera Wetland	UT of J&K	2005	13.75
67	Hygam Wetland Conservation Res.	UT of J&K	2022	8.02
68	Shallbugh Wetland Conservation	UT of J&K	2022	16.75
69	Surinsar-Mansar Lakes	UT of J&K	2005	3.5
70	Wular Lake	UT of J&K	1990	189
71	Tso Kar	UT of Ladakh	2020	95.77

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S.No.	Ramsar Site	State/UT	Designated Year	Area (km²)
72	Tsomoriri	UT of Ladakh	2002	120
73	Bakhira WLS	Uttar Pradesh	2021	28.94
74	Haiderpur Wetland	Uttar Pradesh	2021	69
75	Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2019	2
76	Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2019	7
77	Saman Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2019	5
78	Samaspur Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2019	8
79	Sandi Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Pradesh	2019	3
80	Sarsai Nawar Jheel	Uttar Pradesh	2019	2
81	Sur Sarovar (Keetham Lake)	Uttar Pradesh	2020	4.31
82	Upper Ganga River	Uttar Pradesh	2005	265.9
83	Asan Barrage	Uttarakhand	2020	4.44
84	East Kolkata Wetlands	West Bengal	2002	125
85	Sundarban Wetland	West Bengal	2019	4,230

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