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Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

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Why in News

Over a lakh migratory water birds arrived at the **Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh** in winter 2020-21.

Key Points

- **Location:** Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh.
- **Formation:**
 - In 1975, Pong dam was **built across the Beas River**. It is also called the **Pong reservoir** or the **Maharana Pratap Sagar**.
 - In **1983**, the **entire reservoir was declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary** by the Himachal Pradesh government.
 - In **1994**, the Government of India declared it a “**Wetland of National Importance**”.
 - Pong Dam Lake was **declared as Ramsar Site in November 2002**.



- **Destination for Migratory Birds:**

The sanctuary plays host to around 220 species of birds belonging to 54 families. Migratory birds from all over Hindukush Himalayas and also as far as Siberia come here during winter.

- **Rivers:**

- The lake is **fed by Beas River and its numerous perennial tributaries** such as Gaj, Neogal, Binwa, Uhl, Bangana, and Baner.
- The lake **harbours around 22 species of fish**, including rare fish like sal and gad. The adequate water level of the lake makes it an ideal destination to indulge in water sports.

- **Vegetation:**

The sanctuary area is covered with **tropical and subtropical forests**, which shelters a great number of Indian Wildlife animals.

- **Flora:**

Eucalyptus, acacia, jamun, shisham, mango, mulberry, ficus, kachnar, amla and prunus.

- **Fauna:**

Barking deer, sambar, wild boars, nilgai, leopards and oriental small-clawed otters.

- **Avian-Fauna:**

Black-headed gulls, Red necked grebes, plovers, terns, ducks, water-fowl egrets, and more.

National Parks in Himachal Pradesh

- **Great Himalayan National Park:**

- Great Himalayan National Park, located in the Banjar sub-division of Kullu district, was officially declared as a National Park in 1999.
- In 2014, the Great Himalayan National Park received the status of being a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** for its wonderful contribution towards biodiversity conservation.
- Species which are found here are like Greater Blue Sheep, Indian Pika, Rhesus monkey, Himalayan black bear, Himalayan brown bear, Red fox, Mongoose.

- **Pin Valley National Park:**

- Pin Valley National Park, located in Lahaul and Spiti District, was established in 1987.
- Various endangered species including the **snow leopard** and **Siberian ibex** find their natural habitat.

- **Inderkilla National Park:**
 - Inderkilla National Park is located in the Kullu district in Himachal Pradesh and established in 2010.
 - Animals of the Himalayan region like leopards, deers and, birds which even include the rare birds of the summer season, and insect species are varied and can be seen from time to time.
- **Khirganga National Park:**
 - Khirganga National Park is located in Kullu and was established in 2010.
 - The national park is situated at a height of around 5,500 meters and is spread across an area of about 710 square kilometers.
- **Simbalbara National Park:**
 - Simbalbara National Park is located in the Paonta Valley of Sirmour District.
 - The national park was established in 1958 as the Simbalbara Wildlife Sanctuary covering an area of 19.03 square kilometers.
 - In 2010, it was turned into a national park by merging an additional 8.88 square kilometers of the area to its boundaries.

Source: IE