



New Ramsar Sites

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Why in News

Recently, the **Meteor lake at Lonar in Buldhana** district of **Maharashtra** and the **Soor Sarovar** at Agra have been declared **Ramsar sites**, a conservation status conferred by **International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**.

- Earlier this year **Kabartal Wetland (Bihar)** and **Asan Conservation Reserve (Uttarakhand)** were also designated as **Ramsar sites**.
- With latest inclusions, the total number of **Ramsar sites in India is 41**, the highest in South Asia.

Key Points

- **Lonar Lake**



- **Location:**

- The **Lonar lake**, situated in the Deccan Plateau's volcanic basalt rock, was created by the **impact of a meteor** 35,000 to 50,000 years ago.
 - The lake is part of **Lonar Wildlife Sanctuary** which falls under the unified control of the **Melghat Tiger Reserve (MTR)**.
 - It is also known as Lonar crater and is a notified **National Geo-heritage Monument**. Geo-heritage refers to the geological features which are inherently or culturally significant offering insight to earth's evolution or history to earth science or that can be utilized for education.
 - It is the second Ramsar site in Maharashtra after **Nandur Madhmeshwar Bird Sanctuary in Nashik district**.
 - The water in the lake is **highly saline and alkaline**, containing **special microorganisms like anaerobes, Cyanobacteria and phytoplankton**.

- **Soor Sarovar Lake:**



- It is also known as **Keetham lake** situated within the **Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary**, which was declared as a bird sanctuary in the year 1991.

- **Location:**

- This lake is situated alongside river **Yamuna** in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
 - The **Soor Sarovar** bird sanctuary covered an area of **7.97 sq km**.
 - It is today home to more than **165 species of migratory and resident birds**.
 - It also has a **Bear Rescue centre** for rescued dancing bears.

- **Benefits:**

- With **Ramsar status**, the sites will benefit in terms of **international publicity and prestige**.
 - They will get **Financial aid** through the **convention's grant** and also access to **expert advice** on national and site-related problems.

Ramsar Site

- **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** is an **intergovernmental treaty** adopted in **1971** in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.
- It **came into force for India on 1st February, 1982**. Those **wetlands which are of international importance** are declared as **Ramsar sites**.
- The **Convention's mission** is “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.
- The **Montreux Record** is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. It is **maintained as part of the Ramsar List**.
- At present, two wetlands of India are in Montreux Record:
 - **Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and**
 - **Loktak Lake (Manipur).**
- **Chilika Lake** (Odisha) was placed in the record but later removed from it.

Source: IE