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Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management

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Why in News

Recently, on the occasion of the **World Wetland Day**, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change announced the establishment of a **Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM)**, as a part of the **National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)**.

- **World Wetlands Day** is celebrated every year on the **2nd of February**.
- The year 2021 also commemorates the **50th anniversary** of the **Convention on Wetlands** signed on 2nd February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
 - The theme for 2021 is **'Wetlands and Water'**.
 - It was first celebrated in **1997**.

Key Points

- **Significance of Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM):**
 - The dedicated Centre would **address specific research needs and knowledge gaps and will aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management** and wise use of the wetlands.
 - It will help in **building partnerships and networks** with relevant national and international agencies.
 - It would serve as a **knowledge hub** and enable exchange between State/ UT Wetland Authorities, wetland users, managers, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.
 - It would also **assist the national and State/UT Governments** in the design and implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks, management planning, monitoring and targeted research for wetlands conservation.

- **Wetlands:**
 - **Wetlands** are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They include **mangroves**, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, **coral reefs**, marine areas no deeper than 6 metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.
 - Though they cover only around **6% of the Earth's land** surface, **40% of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.**
- **Significance of Wetlands:**
 - Wetlands are a critical part of our natural environment. They **mitigate floods, protect coastlines** and build community resilience to disasters, absorb pollutants and improve water quality.
 - Wetlands are **critical to human and planet life.** More than **1 billion people depend on them for a living.**
 - They are a **vital source for food, raw materials, genetic resources for medicines, and hydropower.**
 - 30% of land-based **carbon** is stored in peatland (a type of wetlands).
 - They play an important role in **transport, tourism** and the **cultural and spiritual well-being** of people.
 - Many wetlands are areas of **natural beauty** and many are important to Aboriginal people.
- **Threats:**
 - As per the IPBES (**Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**)'s global assessment, wetlands are the most threatened ecosystem.
 - Wetlands are **disappearing 3 times faster than forests** due to human activities and global warming.
 - According to **UNESCO**, the threat to wetlands will have an adverse impact on 40% of the world's flora and fauna that live or breed in wetlands.
 - **Major threats:** Agriculture, development, pollution and **climate change**.

- **Status of Wetlands in India:**

- India has nearly **4.6% of its land as wetlands**, covering an **area of 15.26 million hectares** and has **42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)**
 - Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.
 - There are currently over 2,300 Ramsar Sites around the world.
 - Recently, India has added **Tso Kar Wetland Complex** in Ladakh as its 42nd Ramsar site.
- Wetlands are regulated under the **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**.
- The 2010 version of the Rules provided for a **Central Wetland Regulatory Authority**, but new Rules of 2017 replaced it with state-level bodies and created a National Wetland Committee, which functions in an advisory role.
 - The **newer regulations removed some items** from the definition of “wetlands” including backwaters, lagoons, creeks, and estuaries.
 - Under the 2017 regulations, process to **identify the wetlands has been delegated to the States**.

National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management

- **Location:**

It is located at **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu.

- **Divisions:**

It has various research divisions including, Geospatial Sciences, Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Coastal environmental impact assessment, Conservation of Coastal & Marine Resources, etc.

- **Objective:**

- It aims to **promote integrated and sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas** in India for the benefit and wellbeing of the traditional coastal and island communities.
- It also intends to promote **sustainable** coasts through increased partnership, conservation practices, scientific research and **knowledge benefit** and well being of the current and future generation.

- **Role:**

- **Survey of India** and NCSCM have **mapped the Hazard Line for the entire coast of India**, which includes vulnerability mapping of flood, erosion and sea-level rise.
- It also **advises the Union and State Governments and other associated stakeholders** on policy, and scientific matters related to **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)**.

Source:PIB