



Ramsar Sites & World Environment Day

Why in News?

On [World Environment Day](#), India added **two more wetlands**—Khichan in Phalodi and Menar in Udaipur—to the [Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance](#).

- These additions **increased the total number of Ramsar Sites in India to 91.**

World Environment Day (WED)

▪ About & History:

- World Environment Day was **established in 1972** during the [United Nations Conference on the Human Environment](#) held in Stockholm.
 - Later that year, the **UN General Assembly officially designated June 5** as World Environment Day.
- The **first celebration** took place in **1973 with the theme “Only One Earth,”** marking the beginning of what would become the largest global platform for environmental awareness.
- WED celebration in 2021 started the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration \(2021-2030\)](#) which is a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the seas.

▪ WED 2025:

- The **Republic of Korea** will host World Environment Day 2025 with a focus on **ending plastic pollution globally.**
- The **theme for 2025** is “**Beat Plastic Pollution,**” a global focus on reducing plastic waste.
- **India** hosted the 45th celebration of World Environment Day in **2018** under the **theme ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’**

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Key Points

▪ Khichan Wetland:

◦ About:

- It is situated in the **village of Khichan**, approximately 171 km from Jaisalmer city, Rajasthan.
- It comprises **two water bodies, Ratri river and Vijaysagar pond**, riparian habitat and scrub land.
- **Migratory Bird Habitat:**
 - The sanctuary hosts **three migratory bird species: Kurjan, Karkara, and Kunch**, locally known names for **Demoiselle Cranes**.
 - **Khichan Bird Sanctuary** is globally renowned as the "**Demoiselle Crane Village**", attracting bird watchers and researchers from around the world.
 - These **birds migrate to Khichan from** regions such as Southwest Europe, the **Black Sea**, Poland, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and parts of North and South Africa.

▪ Menar Wetland:

◦ About:

- Menar Wetland is a **freshwater monsoon wetland complex** located in Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- The wetland is formed by **three interconnected ponds—Braham Talab, Dhand Talab, and Kheroda Talab**—along with the agricultural land that links Dhand and Kheroda.
- During the monsoon season, the surrounding farmland floods, creating additional habitat for water bird species.
- **Biodiversity and Key Species:**
 - The site supports a variety of birdlife, including the **critically endangered white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*)** and **long-billed vulture (*Gyps indicus*)**.
 - It also harbours over 70 plant species, including mango trees (*Mangifera indica*) near Braham Talab.
 - The mango trees serve as roosting sites for a large colony of **Indian flying foxes (*Pteropus giganteus*)**, adding to the wetland's ecological richness.
- **Model of Community-Led Conservation:**
 - It is considered one of the finest examples of **community-driven conservation** in Rajasthan.
 - Residents of Menar village play a crucial role in protecting wildlife, actively working to prevent poaching and fishing in the area.

▪ Ramsar Convention

◦ About:

- The **Ramsar Convention** is an international treaty signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, under the auspices of **UNESCO**, aimed at conserving wetlands of international importance.
 - In India, **it came into force on 1st February 1982**, under which wetlands of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
 - **As of August 2024, Tamil Nadu (18)** has the highest number of Ramsar sites, followed by **Uttar Pradesh (10)**.
- **Montreux Record** is a register of **wetland sites** 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**.

- **Criteria for Identifying Ramsar Sites:**

- Currently, there are **nine criteria for identifying Wetlands** of International Importance, which include sites containing representative, rare or unique wetland types; sites of international importance for conserving biological diversity; specific criteria based on waterbirds, fish, etc.

RAMSAR CONVENTION

About

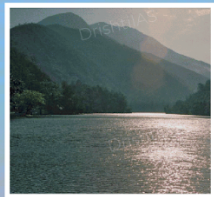
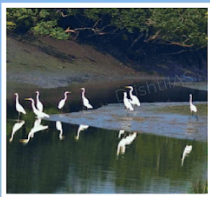
- Also known as the Convention on Wetlands.
- An intergovernmental treaty, adopted in 1971, in Ramsar, Iran.
- Entered into force in 1975.
- Wetlands that are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- Largest Ramsar Site in World: Pantanal: South America

Montreux Record

- Adopted in Montreux (Switzerland) in 1990.
- Identifies Ramsar sites that need priority conservation attention at national or international level.

Wetlands

- A place in which the land is covered by water – salt, fresh, or somewhere in between – either seasonally or permanently.
- Take many forms including rivers, marshes, bogs, mangroves, mudflats, ponds, swamps, billabongs, lagoons, lakes, and floodplains.
- World Wetlands Day: **2nd February**



India & Ramsar Convention

- Came into force in India: **1982**
- Total Number of Ramsar Sites: **91**
- Chilika Lake (Odisha), Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan), Harike Lake (Punjab), Loktak Lake (Manipur), Wular Lake (Jammu and Kashmir), etc.
- Related Framework in India
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 as regulatory framework for conservation and management of wetlands.
- The 2017 Rules decentralise wetlands management and provide for the constitution of the State Wetlands Authority or Union Territory Wetlands Authority.

Key Facts

- Largest Ramsar Site: Sunderbans, West Bengal
- Smallest Ramsar Site: Vembannur Wetland Complex, Tamil Nadu
- State with the maximum number of Ramsar Sites: Tamil Nadu (14)
- Wetlands in Montreux Record:
 - Keoladeo National Park: Rajasthan
 - Loktak Lake: Manipur

