



Two Wetlands in Bihar Designated as Ramsar Sites

Why in News?

India has added two new wetlands from Bihar — **Gokul Jalashay in Buxar** and **Udaipur Jheel in West Champaran** — to the global list of [Ramsar Convention Sites](#) of International Importance.

- With these additions, India's Ramsar tally now stands at **93 sites**, covering 13,60,719 hectares, maintaining its **top position in Asia** and third globally after the UK (176) and Mexico (144).

Key Points

- **Gokul Jalashay, Buxar District:**
 - **Type:** [Oxbow lake](#) located on the **southern edge of the river Ganga**.
 - **Ecological Role:** Functions as a natural flood buffer for nearby villages while providing habitat for over 50 bird species.
 - **Community Linkages:** Provides livelihood through **fishing, farming, and irrigation**.
 - **Local Tradition:** Villagers clean the catchment annually during a **festival**.
- **Udaipur Jheel, West Champaran District:**
 - **Type:** Oxbow lake surrounding a village.
 - **Biodiversity:** Home to **280 plant species**, including *Alysicarpus roxburghianus* (endemic to India).
 - It is an important wintering ground for **35 migratory bird species**, including the **vulnerable common pochard**.
- **About Wetlands:** They are areas of **marsh, fen, peatland, or water (natural or artificial)** with **water that is static or flowing**, including **marine areas with a depth not exceeding six meters**.
 - Wetlands are an [ecotone](#), having land transitional between **terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems**.
- **About Ramsar Convention:** It was adopted in **1971 in Ramsar, Iran**, and provides a global framework for **wetland conservation and wise use**. **India joined it in 1982**.
 - The [Montreux Record](#) (threatened list) lists wetlands with **deteriorating ecological character** due to human activity or pollution. India has **two wetlands** in the Montreux Record:
 - **Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan (1990):** A **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
 - **Loktak Lake, Manipur (1993):** The **largest freshwater lake in Northeast India**, known for its **Phumdis** (floating masses of **vegetation, soil, and organic matter**)
 - [Chilika Lake](#) was included in the Montreux Record in **1993** but was removed in **2002 (the first site from Asia)**.

